



Bridgend & Porthcawl GEM



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THURSDAY, JANUARY 2ND, 2014

'Best year ever' as 1,044 take a Christmas day dip in Porthcawl

IN contrast to all the recent gales, the brave swimmers at Porthcawl's 49th Christmas Morning Swim had comparatively calm weather, sunny intervals, lots of Christmas spirit and goodwill for a chilly dip in the Bristol Channel, reports spokesman IAN STROUD.

With the tide almost full in, 1,044 registered swimmers walked and ran down the beach to the sea and took the traditional Christmas morning dip at Sandy Bay Porthcawl, while an estimated 2,000-plus spectators supported them on a very crowded beach.

At 11.45am, Porthcawl Coastguards signalled the start of the parade and cleared a path through the spectators down the beach for the swimmers.

Many were in fancy dress as they walked from the Hi-Tide Inn to the sea.

The procession of swimmers of all ages, male and female, were led from the Hi-Tide Inn to the beach by Victor Davies and Chris Hughes, each with 49 swimmers to their name.

Spectators cheered and gave their full support to all those taking part in the 49th annual event. Swimmers from all over the UK and overseas took part. Among our regular entrants was veteran swimmer Susan Powell from Cadoxton, Monmouthshire, who hasn't missed a 'Swim' since 1978. There were also two visitors from Australia who joined in the festive event.

The swim is a truly family event, with many different generations of the same family taking to the

sea and many in fancy dress.

The atmosphere all around the swimmers is very special and hard to explain. I look forward each year to meeting old friends, many of whom I only see perhaps at the swim and we exchange a Christmas greeting, sometimes up to our waist in the sea.

This year as I waded into the sea, just above knee depth, I had a very unusual request, a swimmer asked if I would mind taking a photo of him and his wife and handed me a camera!

Swim chairman, Nicola Willis commented: "Once again, we have been grateful to all who supported our swim and the number of people who turned up was fantastic.

"Collections are made during carol singing and during the swim; we hope the bucket collections and swimmers sponsorship will help us to make some generous donations in the New Year. Our beneficiaries this year will be local charities and organisations.

"As a small committee, we are delighted with the way we have been supported once again this year, I would like to thank all swimmers, spectators, individuals, businesses, fellow 'Buckaneers' and organisations who help in so many ways to make the swim such a successful event in the towns calendar.

"To have such a crowded beach, at this time of the year goes to prove that some of our departed founder swimmers were looking down on us again – and provided us with good weather for a swim that saw more people in the water than most summer bank holidays. This was our best year ever," Nicola added.



Just some of the 1,044 hardy souls who braved the ice-cold temperatures for Porthcawl's 49th Christmas Morning Swim. See more pictures by Glyn Evans on page 4, and a history of the swim on pages 6 and 8.

POLICE CONFIRM BODY ON BEACH WAS LOCAL MAN

POLICE investigating the discovery of a body on the beach at Porthcawl on Friday, December 27, have confirmed it was 24-year-old Mr William Harrison, who lived locally.

Police say Mr Harrison was reported missing that morning.

His death is not being treated as suspicious and the circumstances of his

death are being investigated on behalf of HM Coroner. He was last seen wearing a bright red 'Saltrock' hooded top with the 'Saltrock' logo on the front with black jogging bottoms, which had the Guinness logo on the front.

Clothing has not been recovered and police are appealing to anyone who finds items or any personal belongings along the Porthcawl coastline to call 101, quoting reference number 62130404866.

Man (23) must pay £1,000 compensation after attack

THE victim of a street attack which took place outside a Maesteg pub had to receive specialist medical treatment, including microstitches inserted into a lip wound, Cardiff Crown Court has heard.

Shortly after the incident, which was captured on CCTV, Stefan Hnatiuk told the police: "I've got to be honest, I hit someone."

Hnatiuk (23) of Bryntwyn Road, Cymmer, admitted wounding Christopher Williams. He was made subject to a community order for 18 months, involving 100 hours unpaid work and a 8pm to 6am electronically

tagged curfew.

He was also ordered to pay his victim £1,000 compensation and a victim surcharge of £100.

Said Judge David Wynne Morgan: "On the night in question, for some reason or another, you reacted wrongly to something said.

"There was no excuse – it was a heavy blow, and the victim has been left with a very unpleasant scar."

The judge said the single blow had not been followed up, and the victim could have struck his head on the pavement. The

defendant, he added, had expressed remorse.

He said Hnatiuk had no significant previous convictions.

Prosecutor Julian Greenwood said the attack took place outside the Star pub on June 22, shortly before midnight.

The defendant delivered one blow which left Mr Williams unconscious.

So severe was the injury, he had to receive specialist treatment at Morriston Hospital.

The defendant himself was also treated at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend, for a hand injury.

Later, he claimed he was acting in self defence.

POLICE APPEAL AFTER MAN (54) SUFFERS HEAD INJURY IN ASSAULT

POLICE are appealing for information following an assault on a 54-year-old man at around 10.45pm on Friday, December 13, in John Street, Porthcawl.

The police say the man was assaulted by a group of about four male youths and received a head injury which required hospital treatment.

The suspects were then seen heading along John Street towards the sea front.

Anyone who may have any information concerning the incident is asked to contact Bridgend police station on 101; or anonymously via Crimestoppers on 0800 55511. The reference number is 62130391094.

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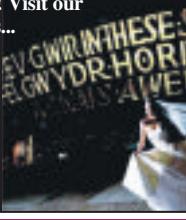


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LOOKING BACK ON A YEAR OF HIGHS AND LOWS IN PARLIAMENT

EVERY week, I send out TWIP (This Week in Parliament) to people who have signed up to receive it.

It contains a breakdown of events in the Commons over the week, to give an idea of the range and variety of issues which go through the Commons Chamber and, more recently, events in some select committees. Looking back over this year's TWIPs I thought I would review the highs and lows of 2013.

January's first TWIP set the scene for the year. The first paragraph reads:

Responsibility was the theme of two of the key debates in Parliament this week, from work ethic among those on the smallest incomes to tax avoidance among those with the largest.

While legislation to crack down on dubious tax avoidance schemes is yet to arrive in Parliament, the Government is fast tracking the Bill to cut benefits which was first announced in December's autumn statement.

The agenda to modernise public services continued with the announcement that all but the highest risk prisoners would not receive probation services from private organisations.

A debate on the theme of dementia allowed passionate

and constructive contributions on how responses to the condition can be improved by health services and by society at large.

The first week of February brought another recurring theme for the year. A debate on the impact of the new Universal Credit benefit in Wales raised concerns that plans were being developed without sufficient planning.

The Government introduced legislation to extend civil marriages to gay people, and allow religions marry gay people if they so wish.

Then in March, parliamentary time was dedicated to Government bills to instigate the 'bedroom tax'.

This issue has driven many into debt and despair. It is also the subject of more calls for help and support from my case worker, and high numbers of both personal and campaign formatted letters to my office.

We also had an announcement that a deal had been reached to enact a Royal Charter for press regulation to implement the Leveson Report.

The Government also took the rare step of introducing retrospective emergency legislation to address its defeat in the High Court over the legality of unpaid work experience for job seekers.

The Jobseekers (Back to Work Schemes) Bill was one of the few occasions where Parliament has used the back

WESTMINSTER NOTEBOOK

Bridgend MP MADELEINE MOON writes an exclusive report from Westminster for The GEM.



dating of legislation to avoid paying compensation following a court case.

April brought prorogation when Bills are ratified and become law and a short recess before the Queen's Speech on May 8. Any Government Bills that are not passed before prorogation are lost.

Parliament also suffered a spectacular power cut, leaving us with lighting and nothing else, returning the Palace to the days before the invention of the personal computer. Not even the division bells worked.

May was a hectic month as business in the House of Commons concentrated on debating the content of the Queen's Speech.

Somewhat bizarrely, the main issue was not included in the Queen's Speech; a Bill for a referendum on EU membership. EU membership popped up at every turn in debates on health and social care and the cost of living. There was even an amendment tabled by some Conservatives signally regretting that no EU Membership

Bill was included in the Speech. This was defeated.

There was also a statement on extending the length of tour for troops being deployed to Afghanistan from this autumn, as the drawdown of British engagement there began in earnest.

June saw a Bill announced in the Queen's Speech have its first outing in the House of Commons; this time it was the turn of the Pensions Bill. Women especially took to their computers to express anger at the increase in the number of years they would be forced to work before receiving a pension.

There was an urgent question for the Foreign Secretary following the Iranian elections which brought a dramatic reduction in tensions and a long thought impossible opportunity for dialogue with a state it had been feared could tip the world into a third world war.

The main event, however, was the statement from the Prime Minister following the G8 summit, during which Syria featured heavily.

In July, as the House

approached the summer recess, history was made with the passing of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act. One constituent told me I would 'roast in hell' for my support of this Bill.

There was a debate on the Government's plan to opt out of European Union justice and home affairs measures and then opt back in. The Defence Reform Bill proposed passing responsibility for procurement of British defence equipment and platforms to a GO CO, a Government Owner and Contractor Operated third party.

September saw the recall of Parliament with a motion on intervention in Syria that failed to pass. Westminster led the world in demanding time for weapons inspectors to assess who had used chemical weapons in Syria, thus giving time for President Putin to reach an agreement to remove Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons.

There were failures and setbacks exposed over Universal Credit and opposition on all sides to the governments lobbying or 'gagging bill'.

A debate on rising energy bills began a discussion which is ongoing. Royal Mail was also declared ready for privatisation.

October brought the Lobbying Bill into the Chamber and the cull of

badgers began in England. These two issues have brought the highest number of emails and letters to my office for the year.

November brought us the Offender Rehabilitation Management Bill and the privatisation of large swathes of Probation Services and a heated debate on the "bedroom tax" with which we started the year.

The Business and Innovation Select Committee also continued its investigation in the controversial privatisation of Royal Mail and in the Chamber we debated a pause in the move towards a military composed of a 30% reserve force.

Finally, we hit December and the themes of the year continued to play out. There was a Statement on energy, the planned GO CO for defence procurement was abandoned, and the Universal Credit proposal was shown to have wasted over £40 million in computing costs and will not reach almost 1 million people by the planned deadline of 2017.

Appropriately, the year ended with debates on waiting times in A&E and the growing use of food banks.

I hope that you all had a very Happy Christmas and that 2014 will bring a better year for us all. One thing I can promise, Life will never be dull in Westminster – depressing at times, but never dull.

KPC YOUTH 'THANK YOU' TO THE PUBLIC FOR SUPPORTING ITS WORK IN 2013

KPC Youth would like to extend thanks again this year to everyone who has supported us during 2013.

This has been a busy and exciting year for the project with new focussed work being undertaken, as well as new fundraising initiatives starting, such as the 'Buy a Brick' campaign.

This campaign is to help raise funds to replace the temporary accommodation we have on site, which is nearing the end of its lifespan, and which due to maintenance issues, needs urgent replacement.

Our aim continues to become more of a community facility in the future, and to work not just with young people but with their families and the wider community.

We are currently undertaking some work towards this under the Family First programme

monthly supporters, and organisations such as Porthcawl Lions and Rotary Club of Porthcawl who undertake local fundraising events of their own to help charities such as ours.

These are to name a few – but we would like to also thank anyone else who has donated to KPC either through donations or gifts in kind that have been made throughout the year.

The year 2014 sees further challenges for the project with funding uncertainties, and the project is currently continuing to fund part of the provision through reserves that have been built up for times such as these.

We really want to ensure the continuity of our project for the benefit of our young people and our community.

The public's support has been really appreciated and we would like to extend our best wishes for 2014.

We hope you will continue to support us in the future, and help us continue with our plans.

To donate online, the address is: mydonate.bt.com/charities/kpcyouth.

ALISON MAWBY

Council backs nuclear veterans

BRIDGEND County problems. Borough Council (BCBC) has become the first local authority in Wales to support a campaign to gain recognition for the thousands of ex-servicemen who were exposed to Britain's nuclear tests during the 1950s and 1960s, and the long-lasting health risks that were caused to them and their descendants.

A BCBC spokesman said: "Around 20,000 men were exposed to repeated nuclear tests as British scientists developed atomic and hydrogen bombs, and evidence given by the ex-servicemen has found that they were neither adequately protected, nor made properly aware of the dangers."

"The radioactive fall-out of the exposure has been felt by the veterans, with them suffering from increased rates of cancer and rare diseases, while it was also been established that their children are six times more likely to develop cancers and leukaemia, along with unusual skin conditions, and are 10 times at risk of having birth defects, including musculoskeletal

"Something needs to be done for these thousands of brave men, who were only ever advised to put their hands over their eyes and turn their backs to the bomb blasts."

"With BCBC taking the lead in passing this motion, I would urge all local authorities in Wales to pass a similar motion to support the BNTVA's fight for justice."

The BCBC Leader and Armed Forces champion, Coun Mel Nott, said: "This is one of the untold stories of modern history, but one that needs to be heard."

"By passing this motion we are sending a clear and concise message on behalf of the communities we represent that our nation should recognise our debt and obligation to the Atomic Veterans and their families."

Coun David White, Newcastle ward member, said: "The cost in human terms of the testing has never been fully calculated, but it is clear that exposure to the testing created a legacy of long term health problems which have also been passed on to their children."

"Something needs to be done for these thousands of brave men, who were only ever advised to put their hands over their eyes and turn their backs to the bomb blasts."

"With BCBC taking the lead in passing this motion, I would urge all local authorities in Wales to pass a similar motion to support the BNTVA's fight for justice."

"I would like to thank the local councillors for their support, and in particular Coun David White."

HIGH TIDE TIMES (UNTIL JANUARY 8)

The high tides listed in this week's GEM are those in Porthcawl. It should be remembered that along the coast, high tide times will vary. For instance, in Barry, the high point will be 20 – 25 minutes later.

DATE	Time	Ht	Time	Ht
	AM	M	PM	M
02 Thur	06.36	9.8	18.54	9.7
03 Fri	07.24	9.9	19.48	9.9
04 Sat	08.12	9.9	20.29	9.7
05 Sun	08.59	9.7	21.21	9.5
06 Mon	09.39	9.4	22.03	9.1
07 Tues	10.33	8.9	22.53	8.6
08 Wed	11.27	8.5	23.49	8.2

While The GEM makes every effort to check the accuracy of tide tables, we recommend that anyone putting out to sea, or walking in an area where they could be cut off, should check with a tide table specific to their location.

Friends of Porthcawl school raise £4,000



THE Friends of St John's School, Porthcawl, recently held their annual Christmas Ball at The Grove Golf Club, where Mr Andrew Thomas of HRT, Cowbridge conducted a highly entertaining auction.

In the same week, the Friends also organised an exciting Christmas Bazaar, transforming the school sports hall into a winter wonderland.

Pupils were thrilled as Father Christmas made his grand entrance

flanked by three giant snowmen and the real Rudolph.

Mrs Catherine Perkins (chairperson of the Friends) said that it had been a hard-working week, but there had been some excellent team work, and the wonderful atmosphere at the ball and at the bazaar had made it all worthwhile!

She was also delighted to report that, as a result of these events, the Friends had raised a bumper £4,000 this half term!



BRIDGEND HEALTH ASSISTANT'S NICE CHRISTMAS BONUS

CHRISTMAS came early for one Bridgend health care assistant – thanks to Wales' largest building society.

After entering a survey at Principality's Bridgend branch, health care assistant Elaine Bennett won £500 to help fund the festive season.

The competition, which was offered to customers across all of Principality's 53 branches in Wales, asked participants about the most important things in their life.

Elaine, who works at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend, and has two children Nick (20) and Emily (15) was astounded when her local Principality branch manager rang to break the good news that she



ABOVE: A happy customer!

Quiz helps Mayor's charity fund

THE Mayor of Maesteg's charity fund received a huge boost just before Christmas from the Garth Inn, in Garth, Maesteg.

The landlord and landlady, Colin and Karen, together with the members of the quiz team, made a fabulous contribution to the fund of £500, which they had collected from the weekly quiz.

Over the years, they have raised a huge amount of money for charitable causes in the town, and they deserve a massive vote of thanks.

LW

Players' moving Armistice production

BRIDGEND Castle Players performed their Armistice production at Bridgend United Services Club, in aid of 'Help for Heroes' and the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

The evening consisted of two parts: James Wilson read a family letter, sent to his grandmother by a friend of his grandfather's, from the front in World War I. This was the first time it

had been read in public, and James Wilson was thanked for sharing this personal letter.

The second part of the evening was a performance of *The Prisoner's Friend* by Peter Drake – a tale about the everyday lives and trials of the soldiers in the trenches of the Great War.

Martin Smidman conveyed the realities of the conflict superbly and the audience enjoyed singing along to songs from the period, during interludes in the play.

SI

Max was there to help celebrate with Business Forum!

MORE than 140 businesses gathered to celebrate their annual achievements at the Bridgend Business Forum's Christmas lunch 2013.

Forum members and honorary guests met at the Coed-y-Mwstwr Hotel in Coyauchur, where they were treated to a medley of Christmas songs from four singing sisters, LaSe, followed by Welsh legend, Max Boyce.

Among the dignitaries at the event were Alison Hoy and Ian Jessopp, chair and vice-chair of the Bridgend Business Forum; the Mayor Councillor Clive James and his wife, Mayress Pauline James; chief executive of Bridgend County Borough Council Darren Mepham; and council leader Mel Nott and his wife, Yvonne.

Chair Alison Hoy thanked guests for their support of the Bridgend Business Forum over the past year and highlighted key achievements, including the launch of the first Bridgend Business Forum Awards 2013.

For further information on the Bridgend Business Forum, visit www.bridgendbusiness-forum.co.uk.

A collection in aid of

Rotarians' praise for Youth Speaks' strong 'arguments'

BRIDGEND Rotary Club held its annual Senior Youth Speaks Competition recently, which was hosted by Bryntirion Comprehensive School.

All students who took part were praised for their skills in addressing and engaging their audience.

It was a very successful evening supported by teachers, family, friends and Rotarians. Topics discussed included ideas such as 'Gender Inequality - a Major Problem in the Workplace'.

The winning team on the night was Brynteg Comprehensive School who discussed the topic that 'The Driving Age should most definitely NOT be increased to 18'.

A very convincing argument was delivered by Connor Lomax. Thomas Prosser acted as Chairperson and Rebekah Lee proposed the Vote of Thanks.

Sophie Keegan won the prize for the best Chairperson on the night and Laura Thomas was awarded a prize for the best Proposer of the Vote of Thanks. Both of these students represented Bryntirion Comprehensive School.

Bridgend Rotary Club president, Allan Brooks presented the prize to the winner of the competition.



The winning team with president Allan Brooks.

FESTIVE END TO THE YEAR!

NEWTON WI had a busy December and the Christmas fayre was very successful, with cakes and crafts doing well.

We have also had choir practice with Margaret, who got us all singing in tune for our WI carol concert in St Davids Hall. This was where all the WI choirs joined up with Only Men Aloud – the only problem being there were only eight of them so not enough for one each!

Next we had our own carol concert where Rev. Colin Richards told the story of Christmas and had us singing familiar carols. We also had our Christmas party with a wonderful spread made by the committee. Mike Boyce then gave us Christmas songs ranging from Elvis to carols!

We would like to wish everyone a very happy new year from Newton WI. Our next meeting is on January 8 and new members are welcome.

Patricia Theodore

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Weather gods smile on Porthcawl as the sun breaks through for the town's Christmas swim

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EITHER side of Christmas Day, the weather was miserable, but Porthcawl's Christmas swim was blessed this year – as on many previous occasions – with clear skies and bright sunshine!

The water? It was still freezing cold!



BOXING DAY RESCUE BY PORTHCAWL LIFEBOAT

RIGHT:
RNLI volunteers were keeping swimmers safe at Porthcawl's Christmas swim.

RNLI volunteers in Porthcawl had to answer a call of duty on Boxing Day, after a yacht's engines failed as it approached Porthcawl's new marina.

The Atlantic 85 lifeboat was called out at 12.25pm after the yacht, which had left Monkstone Marina on the River Neath, and had travelled safely through a moderate to rough sea, hit trouble.

The RNLI crew were able to secure the yacht on a mooring buoy within the shelter of Porthcawl breakwater but outside the marina.

With a falling tide and storms forecast for the following day, it was vital that the yacht was found a safe haven.

Porthcawl RNLI lifeboat manager Philip Missen MBE saw the situation first hand. He said: "Once it was established the yacht had no power to make its own way into the marina, I considered the alternatives."

"First was a tow into the marina but that is not fully operational yet; or there was the other option of towing back to Monkstone – and this would have been very rough and difficult for both crews."

"We were lucky that a member of the harbour master staff was on duty and, following several



attempts, was able to open the gates at the mouth of the new marina."

The helmsman on the lifeboat, Chris Missen, said: "With the yacht only about 100 metres from our slipway, we were able to establish a tow within a few minutes."

"Once safely in the marina, the yacht was moored alongside a pontoon. This was our first experience of towing a vessel into the new marina and I'm sure it

won't be our last. Thankfully, this was a relatively easy recovery and we were happy that the vessel was moored safely, considering the forecast and the sea conditions over the festive period."

Porthcawl volunteer RNLI crew had a very busy Christmas day, too, as eight volunteers, led by helmsman Chris Missen, were on duty at Porthcawl Christmas swim providing safety cover.

That was the year that was!

FOLLOWING their three nights at St Mary's on Ewenny Road, the Bridgend Male Choir was delighted to have been invited to sing at a Christmas service of Remembrance in St Crallo's Chapel, Coyauchurh Crematorium.

Christmas dinners were lady choristers from Tonrefail and Pencoed, many of whom joined in. With the year drawing to a close, the chorally busy month of December was concluded with a wedding at St Mary's Parish Church, Coity, and an outing for the Singing Santas!

The latter is an annual occasion when a number of choristers dressed in Santa costumes sing in support of their Rotary Club of Bridgend friends. Visits to a number of hotels and restaurants are an opportunity for hard working Rotarians to collect for local charities – and now a well-earned rest.

All that's left is to wish all connected with choirs, rotary clubs, other charity fund-raisers and their thousands of supporters every good wish for a prosperous and in-tune new year!

David T Burt

BRIDGEND BRIDGE CLUB RESULTS

BRIDGEND Bridge Club results for December 18:

First, Roger Penton and Mike Best; second, Steve Burgoyne and Ann Fox; third, Bill Turner and Marjorie Morris.

December 20: First, Liam Sheridan and Alan Williams; second, Vida Halford and Glyn Williams; third, Bill Turner

and John Henson.

In addition to the regular club nights on Wednesdays and Fridays at Nolton Church Hall at 7pm, to which all bridge players are welcome, on Thursdays from 2pm until 5pm, also at Nolton Church Hall, there are gentle Bridge sessions primarily for the less experienced, where assistance is available.

The best placed improvers December 19 were: Dilys Bowser, Teresa Griffiths, Leila O'Hagan and Stuart Davies.

Lessons for improvers also take place on a Thursday afternoon. To register an interest, contact Steve Burgoyne (01656 661968) or John Evans (01656 880372).

The club is now closed until January 8.

CINEMA RETURNS TO ST DONATS

WE'RE delighted to announce that cinema is returning to St Donats Arts Centre in 2014, with matinee and evening screenings once a month in the Tythe Barn.

The cinema will offer the very latest in digital projection to screen a carefully selected and

varied programme of current and classic quality films, including Steven Spielberg's Lincoln showing on Monday, January 27 at 2pm.

Further cinema listings can be found on our website www.stdonats.com. Ticket prices are £4.50 for advance sales and £5.50 on the day.

This project has received fund-

ing through the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007 – 2013 which is funded by the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

The funding is administered by Creative Rural Communities, the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Rural Regeneration initiative.

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Christmas day swim history reveals competitive tales...



ABOVE: Vic Davies (with knee bandage) and Chris Hughes (black speedos), who have taken part in more Christmas swims than anyone else, have the honour of leading the swimmers into the sea.



The Mayor and Mayoress of Porthcawl, Councillor Mike and Norah Clarke, with the Royal British Legion swimmers.

by CAROLINE SARLL

FORGET braising the brussels and basting the bird.

For the last 49 years, Christmas Day in Porthcawl, for many robust residents, has been defined by something rather less seasonal: the annual Christmas Day Swim.

It is the third longest-running Christmas Swim in the UK, beaten only by Hunstanton in Norfolk and the Peter Pan Swim in Hyde Park's Serpentine, (which marks its 150th anniversary next year).

In Porthcawl, a record number of daring dippers braved a pre-prandial plunge last week and the organisers are hoping that this will lead to an all-time record number at the big 50th anniversary next year.

Its history is replete with anecdotes, tall stories and classic Welsh humour, in the vein of a Dylan Thomas or Rhys Davies short story.

There is a reluctant donkey, a clown, much Vaseline and some regular fishnet tights, all mixed in with "a slap of sea and a tickle of sand". It is seaside life at its very best.

The event was started in 1964 by veteran swimmers, the late Arlon Owens and 85-year-old retired businessman and shop owner Jack Bridge.

Arlon, who owned the once thriving Sospan Fach cafe in John Street, was renowned for swimming every day of the year. Sadly, he died at Rest Bay on the sands, following one of his daily swims.

His son Gareth, is carrying on the family tradition and continues to don the Coco the Clown costume his

father wore each year, in true maverick style.

Jack, now 85, had to give up quite a few years ago due to bronchitis, but he never misses a year as a spectator and has fond memories of how the festivities began:

He said: "As members of the Chamber of Trade, we were always thinking of ideas to publicise Porthcawl and it was Arlon's idea to take to the sea, a scheme hatched initially while chatting outside Woolies, then developed into the small hours – probably over a pint or two.

"On the day of the very first swim in '64, Arlon, dressed as Coco the Clown, and I as Father Christmas, were towed in boat by my brother's car, down to the Pier. But we hadn't quite got the hang of pre-publicity back then. When we got there, there wasn't a soul in sight!"

"Not daunted though, we spotted some people at Coney Beach, so we took the mountain to Mohammed, as it were, and they threw us both in from there. Soon we had Vic Davies, Lindsay Morgan and David Thomas on board, all keen members of the Lifeguards.

"Never did we think we would end up with the thousands who turn up now, or that we would raise quite so much money for so many local causes.

"What was really funny was the local kids' reaction, when I finally emerged from the water, totally bedraggled and obviously sopping wet in my full Santa regalia. 'Hello Mr. Bridge!' they all shouted. Out of the mouths of babes, no less. My cover was

completely blown".

The occasion now attracts over 1,000 swimmers – from the very young (veteran Chris Hughes took his baby grand-daughter in last year), to the very old, 87-year-old Ken James, from Ogmor Vale, who only stopped swimming two years ago after his wife died and still swims 64 lengths in the Ynysawdre Pool every

have Christmas lunch with my daughter".

Ken was joined annually by the longest-serving swimmer of all, the aforementioned "almost 80-year-old".

Vic Davies, Vic, a widow, who still cuts a dashing figure in his swimming briefs, has never missed a year and, according to Ken, is probably secretly glad that he is now officially the oldest swimmer.

"He used to get annoyed when he thought I wasn't coming and then turned up late, thinking he had the oldest veteran crown for that year" recalls Ken wryly. "But it was all in good humour.

Everyone gets on with everyone else and there is always such a fabulous atmosphere".

Vic, a former Porthcawl Lifeguard with a winsome twinkle in his eye ("They call me the local lothario!") has his own methods for surviving the potentially numbing North Sea: "I put a bit of Vaseline on the 'sticky out bits'!" he jokes.

"I also go to Tenerife every year for two weeks before the swim, paid for by my children, to get an all over tan. I look much better then on Christmas Day. I've had two hip ops and one knee done – and when



Ken James, at 87, has decided to hand over his title of 'oldest swimmer' and will be auctioning his collection of commemorative mugs for charity!



CONTINUED
ON PAGE 8

A JOYOUS END TO THE TERM FOR PENCOED COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

AS reported previously, everyone at Pencoed Comprehensive School is delighted with the recent news at being placed in 'Band Two' in the Welsh Government's banding scheme.

The end of term ended on some other very high notes as well. Pupils in years-8 and 9 enjoyed the 'Big Sing' organised by Mr Owen and Mr Poley, in the school's sports hall.

Also, a very successful Christmas concert was held in Salem Chapel again this year. Thank you very much to Mrs Rhian Jenkins, Miss Rebecca Lewis, Mrs Kay Smith and all the pupils who took part.

The audience enjoyed a whole variety of items, all performed with great enthusiasm by the pupils.

Pupils also laid on a special concert in the afternoon for the school's Senior Citizens' Club and the Llanharan OAP Club. Before going over to Salem, the senior citizens joined in the carol singing in the canteen led by Mr David George, Mrs Ruth Jones and Mrs Christine Lacey.

We're very grateful to Salem Chapel for allowing us the use of the chapel for the concert and the rehearsals. Thank you to everyone for their kind donations towards school activities as collected by FoPCS who provided refreshments in Salem.

Congratulations are in order for a variety of people for a variety of reasons! These include: Mrs Samantha Evans, Assistant Head, on her appointment as Deputy Head, starting in her new role from January 2014; all the year-12 pupils and staff who supported them in the organisation of the Christmas Fayre in the school's sports hall. The fayre included different types of cake and refreshments as well as various competitions.

The fayre forms part of the pupils' Welsh Baccalaureate, contribut-

ing to the community participation and working with others sections.

The total amount raised this year was £1,420 and the charity to benefit will be 'Cymorth i Cerys' as part of Bobath (Children's) Therapy Centre Wales). We're very grateful to Waterstone Homes and The Co-operative for the very handsome hampers they donated.

Pupils in the MLD Resource base also had a stall selling sweets (kindly donated by Cutlers Sweets), with their sales also going towards 'Cymorth i Cerys'.

Members of the school's INTERACT Group have sold a large number of very endearing wooden reindeers as produced by Edgar Birt, their mentor from Bridgend Rotary Club.

The INTERACT Group has also been busy collecting boxes for Operation Christmas Child and entertaining residents at Glanffrwd Nursing Home in Pencoed.

The following pupils were elected as school council members:

year-7 - Hollie Carmody, Sophie Sage, Evan Jones;

year-8 - Rosie Pope, Josh Midlane, Matthew McPhillips;

year-9 - Jessica Phillips, Ellis Brown, Jenna Dyckoff;

year-10 - Grace Shaughnessy, Liam Hiett;

year-11 - Aaron Leyshon, Megan Fry;

year-12 - Harri Legg-Edwards, Caitlin Jenkins (also Pupil Governors);

year-13 - Cherish Bevan and Tom Hiscocks.

All the pupils competed in the Winter Sports Day at the end of term - Llywelyn and Gwenllian Houses tied for first, with Owain and Branwen Houses tying for third.

All pupils who have achieved the attendance target of 97 per cent figure this term are in the Green Zone. Pupils in BMA, OSP and 7ML topped the Premiership for the first half term and enjoyed their bacon

butties!

Congratulations go to Cerys Dyke, Lily Evans, Saffron Foster, Caitlin Jenkins, Taylor Johnson, Harry Lock, Meryl Maund, Connor Rees, Paige Reeves, Nicola Thomas, Sian Thomas and Ben Warman!

They all achieved bronze on their Duke of Edinburgh Award and celebrated in style at the Celebration Ball. All looked fabulous and after the presentation enjoyed dancing the night away with some spectacular moves!

All those who in the space of two hours raised nearly £1,500 for Children in Need in November. Not all activities were as painful as the leg waxing suffered by Mr Owen and Mr Poley!

Well done to the Year-7 pupils who took part in the school 'Readathon' this year. They managed to raise £346.30. A special congratulations to Megan Jenkins who read six books and raised £106.00 for the event. A wonderful achievement!

The money collected has been donated to three charities: 'CLIC Sargent', a charity that provides vital support to children and young people with cancer, 'Roald Dahl's Marvellous Children's Charity' for seriously ill and disabled children and 'Readwell' providing books and storytellers to children in hospital.

Congratulations to both kitchens on achieving five star rating in the National Food Hygiene Scheme. The rating is proof of the constant hard work put in by all members of the kitchen staff in maintaining a healthy and clean environment for the variety of meals served throughout the year.

MLD Resource Base News
AS well as being busy with their work in class and helping out with the Christmas fayre, pupils and staff at the MLD Resource Base have been busy again this term hosting coffee

mornings, fishing and an 'Only Mums Allowed' pamper session! MLD pupils also joined in with the senior citizens for their Christmas lunch and the concert.

A HEART-WARMING TALE OF THE NEW YORK VISIT by Ryan Thorrton

Thirty-seven pupils and three staff departed on Monday, October 28 from Heathrow airport despite 65 scheduled flights being cancelled due to the storms. We arrived at our hotel in the late afternoon and from there we went to Times Square for the remainder of the evening.

On Tuesday morning we went to the Empire State Building and went up to the observatory on the 86th floor. The pupils then had the chance to explore 34th Street. We then went back up to Times Square for the evening.

On Wednesday morning we visited the 9/11 memorial, on the site of the twin towers. This proved to be quite emotional for the pupils when they realised the enormity of the event close up and the number of people killed.

From there we went over to Battery Park, where we caught the ferry to Liberty Island and Ellis Island. The pupils then had the chance to experience Chinatown and Little Italy.

On Thursday we toured Central Park

where we visited Strawberry Fields to see the John Lennon memorial. The weather prevented us from ice skating on the outdoor rink so we all had a hot dog in the rain.

The pupils had further opportunities to explore and shop on Fifth Avenue and 34th Street before we departed for Newark airport in the evening.

The pupils were fantastic throughout and a credit to the school. We met a number of New Yorkers who commented as much when we went for breakfast in a local diner.

One 75-year-old lady was so impressed that she told her daughter about us, who in turn asked her mother to give us a gift so we could buy the pupils a little something from her, if she saw us again. This turned out to be \$300, which was an amazing bit of generosity from someone we had never met. (This is where the hotdogs came from).

Art gallery visit

As part of their A and AS Level course, Mrs Helen Williams took the year-12 and 13 art students to the National Museum and Galleries of Wales, Cardiff. They were asked to look at the drawings, paintings and sculptures (as well as write an evaluation report). Mrs Smith was very pleased with the standard and is sure that the class can match the great comments the department received from the external examiner last year!

In Tune'

The lower school drama club performed to a packed house of very proud families and friends on December 3.

'In Tune', loosely based on the very popular movie 'Pitch Perfect', was written especially for KS 3 drama by Miss Lewis who has been cov-

ering Mrs Hewitt whilst she has been on maternity leave. Our head of drama and performing arts was very proud of all the cast and crew and was even more delighted that she had not had to do any of the hard work for this production!

"I am delighted that the drama department has developed again this year with the help of Miss Lewis who has provided such a fantastic opportunity for the younger pupils to perform their own show," said Mrs Smith.

The show really did prove that Pencoed has talent and was jam packed with energetic and powerful musical numbers as well as some great character acting from years-7, 8 and 9.

The cast were also delighted to hear that Miss Lewis will also be staying with us after Christmas working part-time in the drama and music departments. Here's to the next show Miss Lewis!

All donations from 'In Tune' will go towards the continued refurbishment of the rehearsal room in the Drama department.

'Little Shop of Horrors'

The school production this year is 'Little Shop of Horrors'. Mrs Smith and Mrs Jenkins certainly had their work cut out casting this show as so many talented pupils wanted to audition.

Once again, some parts have been double cast and also some roles split to make sure everyone has a chance to shine on the night! The show

runs from July 9 - 12.

Film roles for Pencoed pupils!

A number of budding actors from Pencoed have been chosen to play roles in a brand new feature film called 'BERSERKERS'. Tornado Films auditioned for the roles as part of THE LIGHTNING HUT Saturday Youth Theatre based at school and run by Mrs Smith and Mrs Hewitt.

They spent several days filming in bitter conditions but all had such a fantastic experience especially as they all had to wear authentic costumes and roll around in mud before they became fully involved in their performance!

There are a number of well-known actors in the film and we look forward to seeing them all on the big screen next year!

Lightning Hut

Don't forget you can join our very own Saturday Drama, Dance and Music Youth group! The Lightning Hut meets every Saturday during term time and has over 60 members aged four - 19 years.

The Lightning Hut offers many classes in different skills and recently they had a very special workshop with a Shadow Theatre expert who came down from London to teach them. The new term starts back on Jan 18. www.thelightninghut.com.

Wishing everyone a a busy and prosperous New Year!

Who wants to build what and where?

Ms Catrin Morgan - Sutton Court, 15
Merthyr Mawr Road, Bridgend - Dismantle Holly on side and shorten lateral branches of Cedar tree by 3-4m.
Cardtronics Europe - Londis Supermarket, 1 The Precinct, Wildmill Estate, Bridgend - Installation of ATM. Non-illuminated surround and illuminated acrylic panel to the ATM.
Poundland - 78 John Street, Porthcawl - Installation of six internally illuminated fascia signs.
Paul Thomas - 11 Heol yr Eglwys, Bryncethin - Picket fence to front.
Mr R James - 11 Alma Terrace, Aberkenfig - First floor extension and car parking area.
Harmers - Land at Llangwydd Road, Bridgend - Screening opinion for residential development.
Mr P Knott - 15 High Street, Kenfig Hill, Bridgend - Convert garage into single bedroom granny annexe with extension above.
Ms Tania Smith - 37 Pwllgarth Street, Kenfig Hill - Single storey kitchen/bathroom extension.
Distributed Generation Ltd - Cefn Park Stud, New Road, Cefn Cribwr - Installation and operate one wind turbine with maximum blade tip height of 67m with associated works.
Ms A Stuckey - 125 Heol Croesyt, Pencoed - Re-arrange single storey extension, reposition conservatory to rear of garage and front and rear dormers.
Mr P West - 30 Heol Cae Glas, Sarn - Conversion of dwelling into two units.
Mr C O'Connor - 39 Salisbury Road, Bridgeston - Two storey extension and detached garage to rear (Revision to P/13/379/FUL).
Mr J Price - 38 Salisbury Road, Maesteg - Two storey extension to rear and detached garage.
Mr Mark Fouracre - 33 Fairplace Close, Broadlands - Single storey side extension.
Vodafone Ltd - Land at Old Station Road, Station Approach, Tondu - 15m high street works monopole with replacement ground based equipment.
Mr M Clemett - 2 Hillcrest, Pen-y-Fai,

58 Park Street, Bridgend - Two storey extension to replace existing single storey extension.
Susan James Securities Ltd - Y Lletty, Heol yr Ysgol, Coity - Ground and first floor extension (resubmission of refusal P/13/633/FUL).
Nathaniel Car Sales - Nathaniel House, David Street, Bridgend Industrial Estate - Re-roofing of valeting and tyre fitting bay with first floor loft ancillary store extension.
DV Architects - The Wyndham Arms, Durnraven Place, Bridgend - Three amenity boards, three menu cases, two plaques, one internally illuminated projecting, 16 x floodlights and two fascia.

Mr M Fouracre - 33 Fairplace Close, Broadlands - Single storey side extension.
Vodafone Ltd - Land at Old Station Road, Station Approach, Tondu - 15m high street works monopole with replacement ground based equipment.
Mr M Clemett - 2 Hillcrest, Pen-y-Fai,

DDA ramped access and carers accommodation to first floor.
Cenin Limited - Site of former water tower, Stormy Down Aerodrome, Bridgend - Provision of one wind turbine on site of former water tower.

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Stories of past Christmas day swims evoke happy memories

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

These days, Wendy is an active, passionate and utterly committed member of the hardworking Christmas Swim committee, which meets regularly from September onwards, to discuss strategies and where the substantial donations will go.

"Each year, every penny of the sponsorship money and that collected in buckets on the day goes to good causes locally. "This year, we have cancer sufferer Beth Margetson on our list, who has been refused a life-extending drug by the Local Health Board and is struggling to fund it herself. We try and help where we can".

Wendy now acknowledges the Porthcawl Swim for the inspiring and altruistic occasion it has become and rather regrets her earlier cur-

mudgeonly attitude.

"What my Dad and Jack started is actually amazing and has helped so many people. It is sad that Dad isn't here anymore to see the work continue, but my brother Gareth has taken on his role, so he's here in spirit".

"It was awful when dad died at Rest Bay and Christmas Day became a very sad day for a number of years. But he was doing something he loved, so we have to be grateful for that. The sea was his passion and we must carry on in his memory. It's brought us comfort over the years".

With her mellowing has also come a flood of now much fonder memories, particularly that legendary donkey. "We used to start with a parade - we still do - round the hotels and the Masonic home, singing carols and having a chat

with residents and one year, we'd got hold of this donkey, presumably to pull the sleigh on the beach.

"We put it in the dairy behind dad's caff the night before. On Christmas Day, stubborn as the proverbial mule, it absolutely refused to come out. We pushed it and pulled it, but it simply wouldn't budge".

These days, it's the local fire engine which transports Father Christmas, Coco and team around the town and much merriment is had - and pleasure given - before the noisy cavalcade reaches Coney Beach.

Jack recalls another unusual mode of transport: "We decided it would be fun for me to arrive by glider, but the first year we tried, the winch stalled and then the tow cable broke.

"Mr Theodore's Landrover, aka the 'hot toddy' wagon managed to get me there on time. The following year we did manage it, going from a height of 900 feet above Stormy Down. Arlon, who was such a great friend, often reminded my wife that we had no insurance!".

These days, health and safety is a greater concern and the life-guards and St John Ambulance are always on duty to ensure that the swim is carried out safely.

"I can tell if someone is getting too cold" says veteran Vic "and I usher them out of the water pretty quickly. "We've only ever had one case of hypothermia, but that chap had been soaking up another kind of liquid in great quantities the night before. He was fine, thankfully, but he never turned up again. We really are very vigilant".

The Christmas Swim website bears a clear warning to all potential participants: Keep warm prior to the swim. No alcohol before the swim. If you are over 50 or on medication, check with your doctor. Those who have passed the Rubicon into middle age, yet are in denial, please take note.

In recent years, there are probably just as many women as men who take the plunge. One of these is stalwart Susan Powell, aged 59, who has been coming to Porthcawl on Christmas Day, from her home in Caldicot since 1978.

"I didn't learn to swim until I was 16, but then I met Arlon Owens and we became friends with the family. It'll be my 35th swim this year"

For Susan, as for many, the event offers a sense of belonging and camaraderie in what might otherwise be a quiet day." My Mum

died in 2005, so now it's just me and my dad. We go down together, then have our Christmas dinner when we get home.

"It's a great community feeling and it's not always that cold. I've never worn a wetsuit like some of the newcomers do. Not once!".

Joining Susan, will be Jackie Jones, who has also swum regularly with her husband Graham. For years she was Mother Christmas and donned a suitable costume, including the obligatory fishnet tights.

"She still puts those on on Christmas morning" quips Wendy. "It's all in the name of good fun". Like Vic and his shiny Vaselinised torso, it would seem the event has spawned more than the odd exhibitionist.

"Why not, if it helps to raise so much money?"

For Ken James, 2013 will also, he hopes, have provided an extra financial boost to the Christmas Swim coffers.

"I'm clearing my house out, in case I should die tomorrow - who knows what's round the corner?" and I am donating all of the Christmas

mugs I have collected over the years- all 26 of them, to the Christmas Swim Committee.

"They can auction them as a special collection and raise even more funds for local charities and needy causes. I suppose I'm closing that chapter of my life really and I'll be glad that all those years of freezing limbs and chattering teeth will ultimately result in helping someone."

Still as fit as a fiddle (albeit it without Vic's permatain), was Ken tempted when the morning of the 25th arrived?

"If I'm honest, yes. I thought I could still do it and travel down to my daughter's in Portsmouth afterwards.

"But it's not the same now that Barbara's not here. No waiting towel. And no hot soup. Wherever I am, I try not to leave my house for too long. I've lived there for over 50 years and I still feel as if Barbara is there with me".

With the amazing turnout this year, it is obvious that the swim has an enduring appeal. "It really is an event that's carried out in true Christmas spirit" says founder member Jack.

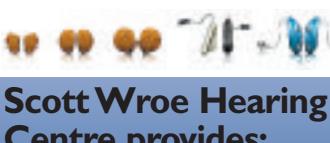
"As always, it will raise a substantial sum of money and it brings the whole community and hundreds of families together. It is such a fantastic way to start Christmas Day, which has become so commercialised in recent years".

"It's an unbelievable



ABOVE: Leon Marks and daughter Romy travelled all the way from Luxembourg.

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WHAT'S ON / in brief

PACT date

A PACT meeting will be held on January 9 at 6.30pm in the Bethlehem Life Centre, Cefn Cribwr.

Youth Project annual meeting

THE annual meeting of Llynfi Valley 11-25 Youth Project is to be held at the Courthouse, 4 Station Road, in Maesteg on January 15, at 5.30pm.

Supported by Bridgend Association of Voluntary Organisations (BAVO), the project aims to support, develop, educate and assist young people within the local community.

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Thanking everyone for their continued support

New date

BETTWS PACT meeting will now be held on Thursday, January 23 at 11.30am in Bettws Life Centre, instead of January 16 as previously advertised.

£1,000 tee-off for Sandville!



The above picture was taken by Keith E Morgan when Simon Hopkin, secretary/manager, and Barrie Edwards, immediate past captain of Pyle & Kenfig Golf Club, presented a cheque for £1,000 to Sister Gwyneth Poacher for the Sandville Self Help Centre at Ton Kenfig.

Forward into a new year with Bridgend WI!

WE wish all our members old and new, a Happy New Year from Bridgend WI – and remind everyone that our next meeting will take place at the Hope Baptist Church hall on January 16 at 7.30pm.

enjoyed by all in December.

Looking forward, here are some dates for your new diaries: An Italian day on March 8 in Nolton church hall, Bridgend (International Women's Day) and a guided city walk in Bath to take place on March 27.

Names have to be submitted by the end of January for these events. Visitors or new members are welcome to attend our meeting in January.

For more information, contact 01656 653085, or 01656 857818. TB

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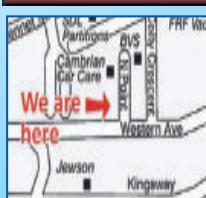
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Christmas at the Sandville



ABOVE: Candles are lit ready for the service.



ABOVE: Emma and her mum were looking after the refreshments.



ABOVE: Drawing the raffle.

Photographs by
Keith E Morgan

A CHRISTINGLE candle service was held in St Michael's Church at the Sandville Self Help Centre, Ton Kenfig, just before Christmas.

The service was conducted by Rev Canon Philip Masson, Archdeacon of Margam and Rector of Porthcawl, Newton and Nottage.

The church was packed to capacity for the service, with guitarists Ray and Wyn providing the music.

A buffet was enjoyed afterwards in the main building and the raffle was drawn by Canon Masson, assisted by local children. Tea was served by Emma and her mother.

A total of £840 was raised for the Sandville over the Christmas period.



Residents hand £500 cheque to BHF charity

OAPs living in a sheltered scheme run by Newydd Housing Association like to "give something back", and this year organised a raffle in aid of the British Heart Foundation (BHF).

Chris Murrell of the residents' association said: "We managed to raise the fantastic amount of £501. Pictured above for the cheque presentation were Chris Murrell from Arthur Davidson Court, Kim Hooper and Lauren Campbell from BHF, and Muriel Thomas of Arthur Davidson Court, too.

"We would like to

whole-heartedly thank everyone who contributed. Special thanks to Sandra Rehman, of Arthur Davidson Court, who single-handedly raised £223, but was unable to attend the presentation following a recent mini-stroke. We all wish Sandra a full and speedy recovery."

PACT meetings

CADOC PACT will now be held at Palmerston Community and Learning Centre on January 8 at 6pm.

BUTTRILLS PACT, Philip John Community Room, Barry Library on January 9 at 6.30pm.

DYFAN PACT, Buttrills Community Centre, January 12 at 7pm.

COURT PACT, Chilcott Room, Barry YMCA, Court Road on January 16 at 6pm.

Coffee and chat, The Red Fox, Penllyn, on January 8 at 11am.

Coffee and chat, Horse and Jockey pub, Wenvoe, on January 9 at 11am.

Coffee and chat, The Bush Inn, St Hilary, on January 9 at 11.30am.

STANWELL PACT, Glyndwr Hall, Glyndwr Road, on January 10 at 7pm.

ST AUGUSTINES PACT, The Windsor Arms public house on January 29 at 7pm.

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New scheme teaches skills to the homeless

Coun Bronwen Brooks watches a lesson in progress.



STAFF from the Vale Council's homeless hostel, Ty Iolo, and council contractor Ian Williams Ltd have teamed up to teach DIY skills to former and current residents of the hostel.

The four-week training course was held at Robert Price Building Merchants in Barry, and offered training in painting, wallpapering, carpentry and tiling to give tenants the confidence to undertake home improvements once they have their own home.

Lee Chappell, a previous resident of Ty Iolo, said: "The people are very friendly and patient and the course gives you a head start for when you move into your property."

Coun Bronwen Brooks, cabinet member for housing, building maintenance and community safety, who was

invited to the final course, said: "I was really pleased to come and see the volunteers passing on their skills. This project is what community spirit is all about."

Sinead O'Neill, customer service and community manager for Ian Williams, said: "We are committed to delivering the community promises that we make to our customers. Ty Iolo and its dedicated staff offer an essential service to many individuals and families who find themselves in need of temporary accommodation.

"What is special about this type of project is that there is always a tangible outcome at the end."

Ian Williams, manager of Ty Iolo, and the Vale Council are now in the process of evaluating the project and plan further sessions during 2014.

WHAT'S ON / in brief

Tax help for elderly

A TAXHELP for Older People (TOP) income tax surgery offering FREE professional advice to older people on a restricted income will be held at Roz Couzens' Chiropody Surgery, Unit 4, Commercial House, Commercial Street, Llantwit Major CF61 1RB on January 6 from 10am until midday. No appointment is necessary.

To access the TOP's helpline telephone 0845 601 3321, or 01308 488066. Home visits can also be arranged via this helpline for people unable to attend the surgery.

FoE meeting

THE next meeting of Barry & Vale Friends of the Earth will be on January 7, at 7.30pm, in the Castle Hotel, Jewel Street, Barry.

Objections were sent to the Vale of Glamorgan's plan for the next 15 years – from fracking to nuclear power at Hinckley Point and housing development plans.

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Pupils have a busy end of term programme

CLASS 9SP held a cake break and raffle recently and raised over £80 for the Children's Cardiac Unit at the University Hospital of Wales.

They have also donated their old toys to the play room on the ward.

Pupils in years 10 – 12 visited the Clothes Show Live exhibition in Birmingham NEC. Not only did they shop till they dropped, but they also saw professional fashion shows, hair and beauty demonstrations and style makeovers.

NEWS FROM BRYN HAFREN SCHOOL

Pupils also saw former pupil, award-winning Hannah Williams show her graduate collection on the catwalk.

On December 17, pupils delivered 52 hampers to elderly residents in Barry as part of the annual Christmas hamper tradition at Bryn Hafren. The hamper were bursting with food, from everyday items to chocolate treats, and were topped with a Christmas cake made by the Food Technology

Department.

Staff at Bryn Hafren put on an extra special nativity play for pupils in years 7 to 10. The cast was led by headteacher Mr Whitcombe as Joseph, and deputy headteacher Mrs Olden as Mary.

Year-7 pupils visited the Memorial Theatre to watch the Billboard panto Jack and the Beanstalk, starring our very own Mr Coombs.

A group of year-8 pupils have been working on a special

SP

Christmas enterprise project recently. They have designed and made a range of products in small groups over the last few weeks, and have been selling them to pupils during the last week of term to raise money. Products ranged from stockings, Christmas tree decorations and jewellery.

Year-8 pupils were lucky enough to go on a reward trip to see *Frozen* in the cinema; while year-9 pupils went to Planet Ice to go ice skating. The 5x60 regulars were rewarded with a ski trip as well.



BOXING DAY RECORD FOR THE BEACH VOLUNTEERS



FRIENDS of Barry Beaches cleared and recycled a record amount of rubbish at Knap beach on Boxing Day.

The next beach clean will take place on Sunday January 26 at Porthkerry beach meeting at 3pm.

ABOVE: Volunteers celebrate their record 'clearance' at Knap beach.

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New year, new start, new language – learn Welsh!

WHY not join one of our Welsh courses in January, or come along to one of our FREE events below, to get you started and to learn more about the Welsh culture, language, and the options available to you?

For more information, contact us on www.learnwelsh.co.uk

02920 874710, or info@learnwelsh.co.uk
EVENT: Cymraeg over a Cuppa, FREE coffee and cake.

Location: Little Blue Deli, 3 Thompson Street, Barry.

Date and time: Tuesday, January 21, from 4pm – 6pm.

Major; Wednesday, January 22, from 1pm – 3pm.

Foxy's Deli, 7 Royal Buildings, Penarth; Thursday, January 23, from 5pm – 7pm.

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free Welsh Taster course: at Castleland Community Centre, on Saturday, February 8, from 10am – 1pm.
Tedi Twt Storytime Sessions at various libraries – Saturday, January 18, from 10am – 2pm.



IMPROVE WELSH LANGUAGE SKILLS AT PALMERSTON

A brand new project for Welsh speakers is to be launched from January 2014.

Palmerston Community Learning centre, Barry will be hosting an exciting new programme of activities through the medium of Welsh. The project is to be offered by the Vale Adult and Community learning partnership.

The centre will be open from 6pm every Monday evening for visitors to enjoy coffee and snacks, use the free internet Café, meet friends old and new and play board games.

A variety of activities will be available from 7pm-9pm, including crafts and textiles workshops and a computer workshop – with the chance to improve your computer skills, use internet and email, job-search and CVs

An exciting new Welsh singing class "Canu yn Gymraeg – Sing in Welsh" will be launched under the direction of tutor Alice Jones. It is hoped that a new community choir will be formed and perhaps even perform at the 2014 Eisteddfod in Llanelli.

Other activities planned include a Welsh Book Club and a 'Brush up your Welsh' course.

Everyone is welcome to drop in and see for themselves what's on offer. The organisers are keen to meet Welsh speakers, Welsh Community groups, former pupils of Welsh schools and Welsh learners who are ready

to practice their language skills.

A warm welcome will be extended to all.

Mae menter newydd ar gyfer staradwyr Cymraeg yn dechrau ym mis Ionawr 2014.

Bydd Canolfan Addysg Gymunedol Palmerston, y Barri, yn agor y drysau ar gyfer rhaglen newydd o weithgareddau cyfrwng Cymraeg, a drefnir gan Barmeriaeth Addysg Oedolion a Chymunedol Bro Morgannwg.

Bydd y ganolfan ar

agor o 6 tan 9pm bob nos Lun i oedolion alw i mewn am banded a sgwrs, lluniaeth ysgafn, definnyddio cyfrifiaduron am ddilim, cwrdd â ffrindiau hen a newydd a chwarae gemau bwrdd.

Ceir amrywiaeth o ddisgwyliadau o 7-9pm gan gynnwys crefftau a thesiciliau, gweithdy cyfrifiaduron, definnyddio'r we, chwilio am swyddi a drefnir gan Barmeriaeth Addysg Oedolion a Chymunedol Bro Morgannwg.

Bydd y ganolfan ar

barth Canu yn Gymraeg – Sing in Welsh fydd Alice Jones, sy'n broffiolad ac egnol, ac hoffai groesawu staradwyr Cymraeg a dysgwyr newydd yn ogystal â chyn-aelodau côr yr eisteddfod.

Bydd dosbarth "Gwella'r Cymraeg" yn arbenigol ar gyfer cyn-ddisgyblion ysgolion Cymraeg sy'n teimlo bod eu Cymraeg yn rhhyddol.

Croeso i bawb i ddod i dysgu, cymdeithasu a chanu drwy'r Gymraeg.



Dysgu drwy'r Gymraeg

Learning through the medium of the Welsh language

Cardiff and Vale Community Learning Partnership
Partneriaeth Addysg Gymunedol Caerdydd a'r Fro



Canolfan Addysg Gymunedol Palmerston Palmerston Community Learning centre

Bob nos Lun

Every Monday Evening

Dewch rhwng 6 a 9 am luniaeth ysgafn, gemau a gwegaffi.
Drop in from 6.00pm for refreshments, games and Internet Café.

Amrywiaeth o weithgareddau o 7pm/Variety of activities from 7pm

- Canu yn Gymraeg/ Sing in Welsh
- Gwella'r Cymraeg/Brush up your Welsh
- Gweithdy Cyfrifiaduron/Computer Workshop
- Celf a Chrefftau/Arts and Crafts
- Clwb Llyfrau/Book Club

Croeso i bawb/All Welcome

Gwybodaeth pellach/To find out more Tel 01446 733762
mmfurnham@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Singers raised £230 for appeal

TWENTY members of Cowbridge Choral Society spent an evening before Christmas carol singing around the town in aid of the Noah's Ark Children's Hospital.

Over £230 was collected from customers in the Bear Hotel, The Vale Inn, The Duke of

Wellington, Bar 44, The Horse and Groom, L'Arioste's and The Edmond Arms.

The society would like to offer thanks and appreciation to all the establishments, and to the customers who gave so generously and joined in with the choir.

The society resumes rehearsals today (January 2) when work begins on two pieces for the spring concert, Gounod's *Messe*

Solennelle (St Cecilia) and Puccini's *Messe di Gloria*, which will be performed in March with the Pontypridd Choral Society.

New members are always welcome to join, and experience is not essential. Rehearsals take place in the United Free Church, Westgate St (opposite the Police Station) every Thursday at 7.30pm.

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Walter Mitty (alias Ben Stiller) enthrals, inspires and dazzles in beautiful film

WHILE Ben Stiller may have made his name as a comedic star in the raucous likes of *There's Something About Mary*, the actor has a sensitive side best exemplified in his smaller work in films like *Greenberg* and *The Royal Tenenbaums*.

Stiller's worlds collide in *The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty*, a big-budget comedy/drama directed by Stiller himself which tells the story of the titular Mitty (played by Stiller), a day-dreamer whose life is punctuated by flights of fancy.

When his job is threatened, he must track down a missing photo, a mission that becomes even more fanciful than his mental adventures and one that may very well change his life...

James Thurber's source novel has already been adapted for the big screen once in the 1947 film of the same name starring Danny Kaye, but Ben Stiller's version is faithful neither to that film, nor to the book.



by GARETH JAMIESON
Follow Screen Talk on Twitter - @GEMScreenTalk

a comedic director.

Steven Conrad's script wisely casts the fantasy sequences out early on, using the concept as a launchpad to craft a tale of a man who spends so much time inside his own head that he finds it difficult living in the real world.

While some of Conrad's themes of self-discovery could have felt a little mawkish (and, admittedly, sometimes they do lapse into sentimentality), predominantly the feeling is of wonder and affirmation, Mitty regaining control of his life in (extreme) circumstances, but in a way many watching may wish they could emulate.

In front of the camera, Stiller is perfectly cast as the average guy in extraordinary circumstances, something he's become a little too good at in recent years, but he gives a wonderful performance as the unlikely hero, while Kristen Wiig offers a lovely foil as the woman of his affections.

Kathryn Hahn, Shirley MacLaine and Adam Scott are all superb in supporting roles, but this is a film that hangs entirely on Stiller's shoulders and the actor (and director) relishes the opportunity, in what is a wonderfully uplifting film.

VERDICT: An affirming, charming and beautiful film, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* is a wonderful piece of work, with Ben Stiller's direction hugely impressive and his performance just as strong.

Perfect for an age where people seem to prefer living life inwardly, this is the perfect antidote to that, inspiring and uplifting. Recommended.

SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED: *The Life of Pi* (2012), *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012).

Welsh Society's fundraising efforts help voluntary group



EVERY year, Cymdeithas Gymraeg Dinas Powys Welsh Society holds a charity fundraising and this year's choice of charity was especially pertinent to the village of Dinas Powys.

The Dinas Powys Voluntary Concern Ambulance/Bus is a very special service offered to the elderly of the village, and many of our members are on the rota for driving the vehicle and collecting and delivering our older residents to various venues.

The evening at the Parish Hall was a tremendous success. We were entertained in both Welsh and English by the wonderful classical group 'Fortza', who also

led the assembled guests in carol singing, which was a joy to hear.

It is with delight, therefore, that we can announce that we made a profit of £2,565 on that night and the large cheque was presented to

John Fanshaw, chairman of DPVC (above) following our Christmas service at St Peter's Church in the presence of Dr Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales on December 16.

It will be put to good

use, and enhance the lives of the less mobile members of the community.

The society wishes to thank everyone who helped to make the evening such a success.

IC

The latest Ty Hafan lottery draw winners

THE following are winning numbers in the Ty Hafan Crackerjackpot lottery draw number D806.

- £2,000: 841285.
- The rollover, which now stands at £1,500 was not won this week.
- £10: 645666, 630519, 482753, 518332, 559763, 305821, 563444, 543242, 757137, 549383, 597090, 226532, 111184, 906271, 256335, 432096, 385523, 660302, 840138, 333343.
- £5: 441807, 670630, 586246, 290165, 997083, 714535, 281870, 883958, 680589, 741141, 594645,

763072, 606985, 711737, 191780, 295184, 339320, 496669, 787326, 671739, 383062, 107773, 171352, 152130, 478504, 171467, 667850, 390380, 926540, 650327, 185573, 866367, 705325, 431702, 887913, 498691, 300139, 562852, 875406, 891774, 503359, 796438, 371823, 465532, 173972, 993575, 644442, 612475, 407354, 193099, 936325, 976968, 855121, 386956, 741152, 186610, 973930.

The GEM cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions contained in the above.

For lottery information please telephone 029 2053 2300.

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YOUR CHANCE TO SHARE COMMUNITY NEWS

NORTH BRIDGEND NEWS

A message for all readers in the north of Bridgend who would like to have items included in the community news columns of The GEM: If you wish to submit reports on any social activity in this region, please contact me. I am very approachable and will endeavour to include every newsworthy subject.

Contact details: CLIVE MITCHELL
1 Tyn-Y-Coed Close, Sarn, Bridgend CF32 9NQ
TEL: 01656 725399
email: tynycoed1@yahoo.co.uk



FIRSTLY, I would like to wish the readers of this column a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

School concerts

I WOULD like to thank the headteachers of Brynmenyn, Tondu and Tynyrheol for inviting me to their school Christmas concerts.

Brynmenyn held its concert this year in the hall of the new Ynysawdre Comprehensive School, and what a magnificent venue it was, and it was packed.

I know some parents feel schools spend too much time in producing these concerts, instead of educating the children in the three R's but the confidence of the children is amazing compared to schooling after the war. In these concerts, children learn correct pronunciation of words, they learn about music, as well as social history.

Santa appeal

BRYNTEG pupils have once again shown their caring side by raising money to help children less fortunate than themselves in the community.

This year's Santa Appeal got off to a fantastic start with form tutors and groups of pupils working harder than ever to come up with new ways to raise as much money as possible for families in Bridgend who needed help and support over the Christmas period.

The Santa Appeal has been a firm fixture on Brynteg's charity calendar for the last 20 years and has helped hundreds of families across Bridgend at Christmas.

Honours list is revealed

A NUMBER of notable personalities in the Bridgend and Vale areas have been recognised in the New Years Honours' List for 2014.

ORDER OF THE BATH, KCB: Derek William Jones, from Penarth, CB, Permanent secretary, Welsh Government. For public service especially to economic and social conditions in Wales.

OBE: Syon Ivan Sadka. Chair, Derek Williams Trust. For services to the National Museum of Wales and to the Arts in Wales, Sully.

MBE: Mrs Morfydd Conway. For services to the community in Gibbonsdown, Barry.

BEM: Maj David Davies, TD. Secretary, Mid-Glamorgan Branch, SSAFA. For voluntary services to SSAFA, Porthcawl.

Gwyn John. For voluntary services to Grassroots Football in Llantwit Major, Vale of Glamorgan.

Mrs Christina Suzanne Selby. Founder, Hats4Heroes. For voluntary service to the Armed Forces in Afghanistan, Penarth.

Well done to all at Brynteg."

Aberkenfig WI
AT Aberkenfig and District Women's Institute's last meeting of 2013, Eunice Williams, president, welcomed members to the pre-Christmas meeting and happy birthday was sung to Ethel Rudge and Gillian Williams.

There will be some fascinating events taking place in the New Year. This month is the whist competition. In March there will be an Italian Day in Bridgend (this is also International Women's Day, March 8). On March 27, there will be a guided city walk in Bath.

The Rosebowl and Brecon Cup flower arranging and craft competitions will be held on May 1 in Miskin Catholic church hall, and an afternoon of fun.

Glamorgan Federation WI Show is on July 25-26 in North Cornelly community centre.

The competition was won by Gillian Williams with a porcelain Nuthatch bird; the raffle prizes went to Ethel Rudge, Dorothy Thomas, Irene Burgess, Margaret Crocker and Maureen Pearce.

Gillian Williams gave a vote of thanks to the committee for all their hard work over the year, and a special thank you to Pat Lewis, who was retiring as secretary.

Then it was time to enjoy the festive tea members had provided.

The first meeting of the New Year will be on January 8 at 2pm in the Welfare Hall, Heol Persondy, Aberkenfig.

Contact secretary Dilys Mitchell on 01656 725399, or www.cobwebs.co.uk

Busby choir

CÔR Meibion Cwm Llynfi (Maesteg and District male voice choir) had a busy pre-Christmas concert programme; it entertained the residents at the Alzheimer's Society Bridgend and District Service Base, Angelton Clinic in Glanrhodfa Hospital.

It also entertained residents at the Glan Yr Afon residential home for the elderly.

The choir held its social night at the Maesteg Celtic club, Garth which was a huge success with a buffet prepared by the wives of choristers.

Presentations were made to Rhian Jenkins, the choir's musical director and Gerwyn Thomas, secretary, by the public relations officer Robert



Santa delivering at Bridgend CBC offices.



ABOVE: Wrapping the presents.

Doyle, on behalf of the choir as a thank you for their hard work in 2013.

The choir has been invited to sing in Cardiff at the end of the month in Pant Mawr.

The choristers are already rehearsing hard for the annual concert on January 25. Tickets will be on sale shortly costing £8 and will be available from any choir member.

Music success
Congratulations go to a pupil from Archbishop McGrath Roman Catholic Comprehensive School, Macie Wallis.

Following an audition at the school, this 12-year-old violin virtuoso, has been chosen to go to Manchester's Chetham School of Music.

Macie, a member of Bridgend CBC youth orchestra, was the first primary school pupil to be selected to play for the Four Counties Youth Orchestra and has also been chosen to join the National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain.

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The New Year is a great time to make a change

AT this time of year, you can't escape the subject of New Year resolutions.

It's a prime example of how hope springs eternal in the human spirit.

Something about the numerical change of year brings out a wave of optimism, and you are inspired to do something that you hope will change your life!

Probably the most popular resolution is to move to a healthier lifestyle, taking more exercise and eating a

healthier diet.

This is hardly surprising, as most of us are weighed down by Christmas indulgences, and the weighing scales have started flashing red for danger!

It's hard to argue with that type of resolution. It's a plan that anyone would benefit from.

However, there are plenty of alternatives for that new year promise to yourself.

Why not decide to read more books during the year?

Just have one on the go all the time, and read a few pages every

day, to get into the habit again.

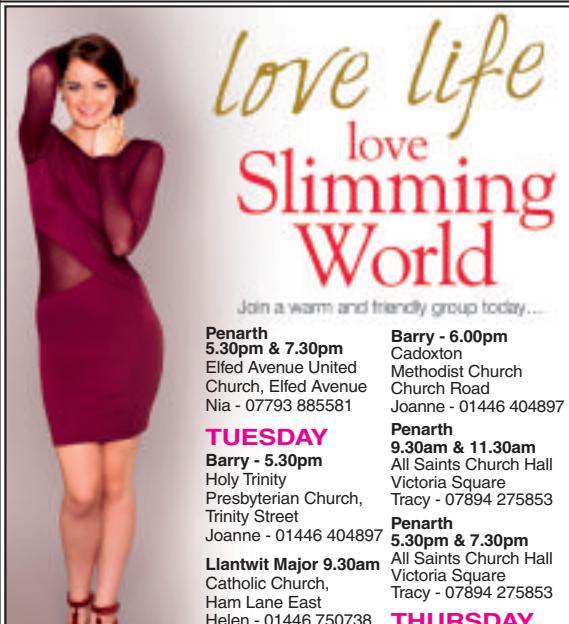
You could, of course, decide to take the option of joining an evening class, or getting involved in a new hobby.

We journalists on The GEM, because of the nature of our job, get to know a little bit about a lot of subjects, but one thing is very clear.

Almost any subject can be fascinating if you get the chance to go deeper into it.

There's so much out there to learn – and not just during January!

PHILIP IRWIN



NEW GROUP From Saturday 4th January

Barry Saturday 9.30am
Cwm Talwg Community Centre, Cwm Parc, Cwm Talwg, Barry CF62 7QS, Wiggy - 07970 450694

MONDAY
Barry 5.30 & 7.30pm
New Jerusalem Church, Tynewydd Road, opp. library, Barry Lorraine - 01446 407002

RHOOSHE 5.30 & 7.30pm
Celtic Way Community Centre, Celtic Way, Rhoshe. Teresa - 07808 077312

SULLY - 6.30pm
The Old School, South Road, Niki - 01446 740394

WEDNESDAY
Barry
4.45 & 6.45pm
St. Francis Millennium Centre, Park Road, Porth-y-Castell, Annamarie - 01446 736534

FRIDAY
Dinas Powys 9.30am
The Cabin by Swimming pool, Hebron Hall, Nicky - 07703313619

Barry - 10.15am
St Helen's Church Hall, Wyndham Street, Niki - 01446 740394

THURSDAY
Cowbridge - 9.30am
Cowbridge Rugby Club, Rob - 07708941279

Barry - 5.30pm
Highlight Park Community Centre, Barry Annamarie - 01446 736534

Dinas Powys 5.30pm & 7.30pm
The Cabin by Swimming pool, Hebron Hall, Nicky - 07703313619

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The Cabin by Swimming pool



TAKING THE WEIGHT OFF YOUR MIND...

LOCAL Slimming World consultant Helen Waite wants to help more people achieve their weight loss goals in 2014.

Helen says: "2013 was a great year for many of my members. With many, many stones being shed in the Llantwit Major groups, and many members reaching their dream target weights by eating everyday normal foods that the whole family are able to eat with you, there is never a better time to join Slimming World."

More than half of people in Wales (57 per cent) are overweight and 22 per cent have an obese BMI: 22 per cent of Welsh children aged three were overweight, just over five per cent were obese and 35 per cent are classified as overweight or obese, including 19 per cent obese.

At Slimming World all 11 to 15-year-old children are able to come free of charge with a parent member. They have their own fantastic plan and are supported on their journey.

"My children are five and seven years old and they enjoy the meals I cook, it makes it so much easier as it's just healthy food rather than 'diet' food."

"Their favourite is spaghetti bolognese or egg, beans and chips," says Helen.

"Men in Wales are more likely to be overweight than women – 62 per

cent of men are overweight or obese, compared to 53 per cent of women. We have an increasing number of male members attending Slimming World and they are more than welcome to attend."

The physical, psychological and social burdens of obesity can be significant.

There is a social stigma attached to being overweight and people who struggle with their weight often suffer low confidence and self-esteem.

Poor mobility and generally poorer quality of life are other common experiences; as are increased risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure and some types of cancer.

Slimming World can help to combat this – losing just 10 per cent of your starting body weight (known as Club 10) – can give you amazing health benefits, as well as make you feel so much better, and it increases your confidence.

If you would like to make 2014 your year, please feel free to pop along to group on a Tuesday at the Catholic Church, Ham Lane East, at either 9.30am, 5.30pm or 7.30pm – or contact Helen on 01446 750738.

*SEE ADVERT
ON OPPOSITE PAGE*

New beginners' Pilates classes

A NEW beginners' Pilates course starts at 7.15pm on Friday, January 10, at St Nicholas Hall, Barry, led by qualified Pilates teacher Sharon Sylvester, and it is small and friendly.

Pilates is a gentle form of exercise for the whole body combining strength with flexibility, suppleness and better posture.

The class is suitable for complete beginners and those with a little

experience of Pilates.

Sharon is a registered osteopath working in Barry with people with all sorts of musculoskeletal pain, from minor sports injuries and bad backs, to arthritic aches and pains.

Most classes are held at St Nicholas Hall in Barry and the 5.30pm class on Mondays is at the Millennium Centre in Barry. One-to-one Pilates sessions are also available.

To join, or for more information, contact Sharon on 07830 085606, or see www.barrypilates.co.uk.

Romilly Osteopathy & Pilates Clinic Barry Pilates Classes

Beginners - Monday 9.15am & 5.30pm,
Intermediate Mondays 9.15am
and Friday 6pm

New Beginners Pilates Course

Starts 10 January, Friday 7.15pm
St Nicholas Hall & Millennium Centre, Barry

Sharon - 07830 085606
www.barrypilates.co.uk

ALL SET FOR A FRESH (theatrical) START IN 2014!

needed to join, just enthusiasm. The rates are very competitive and new students can qualify for a discount with the voucher.

For more information, or to secure your child's place, call Anita on 01446 730656, or 07968 701355.

And also watch out for new classes coming in the near future, jazz and street dancing classes and a class to incorporate: stage make-up, script writing, prop making, lighting/sound etc. Watch this space!

Anita's Theatre School

At Castleland Community Centre, Barry
ACT, DANCE, SING FUN!!
£20 OFF WITH THIS ADVERT
FOR ALL NEW STUDENTS

NEW TERM STARTS
11TH JAN 2014
ESTABLISHED 12 YEARS

Classes every Saturday 2pm - 5pm for ages 4-17yrs at our new central venue. We run small classes so your child has individual attention from our professional and experienced teachers, who's aim is to give each child their knowledge and most of all confidence not only at school but in every day life. Each term family and friends are invited to a presentation to see exactly what the children have learnt.

C/O 34, Station Street, Barry, CF63 4LY / 01446 730656

01446 730656 / 07968701355

**EXCUSES
DON'T BURN
CALORIES**

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Cowbridge Leisure Centre CF71 7DA
Llantwit Major Leisure Centre CF61 1TQ
Penarth Leisure Centre CF64 2NS
Holm View Leisure Centre CF62 9DA
Colcot Sports Centre CF62 8UJ

expressions
TOWNS



**CONTACT VALE OF GLAMORGAN
LEISURE CENTRES ON 01446 403 000**



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Parkwood Community Leisure working in partnership with your Local Authority

leisurecentre.com/excuses-don-t-burn-calories

Lest we forget, Welsh is a British language!

TN reply to Eileen Bayley's letter on bilingual signs in The GEM, December 12, she is right to state that Wales is at present part of the United Kingdom, and I find it a shame that the Welsh signs upset her so much.

If she looks around Wales, she will find the names of thousands of Welshmen, Welsh-speaking, or not, on our Cenotaphs – who were good enough and brave enough to fight and die for the United Kingdom.

Without their sacrifice, who knows what language she would be speaking now?

Many of those young men would have been Welsh speakers, and it is very sad that it is only

recently that we have been able to have Welsh signs and official bilingual forms.

When I served as a member of groundcrew at RAF Brawdy in 1948, there were many Welsh speakers on our shift, and I remember an incident with a pilot who shouted at me: "Stop speaking that foreign language!".

My reply was: "With due respect sir, Welsh is a British language, and if you look at the insignia that is on the front of your aircraft and every aircraft here, it reads in Welsh, *Amddiffynna'r Gorllewin, which means Defend the West*".

And off he went... There were no more complaints.

If Mrs Bayley needs a Welsh tutor to help her, I am available.

**Aled Hughes,
Llanilltud Fawr.**

'RESPECT IS ALL WE ASK'

HOW disappointing and upsetting it was to read Eileen Bayley's letter in The GEM stating that she was "flabbergasted to encounter bilingual signing" and that "bilingual madness is taking over".

There are 584,000 Welsh speakers in Wales and many more thousands of people who wholly support the use of the Welsh language in a country that is bilingual – a country where Welsh and English have equal rights in law – not to mention the heritage our language gives us from 1,500 years of history.

I am also saddened that she takes her experience of one county in Wales as the identity of

It is a shame that Eileen hasn't been able to travel around Wales to experience the different cultures, mannerisms and dialects in our beautiful land.

Welsh is a language I love and choose to speak.

I do not ask Eileen to love the language. I do not ask her to speak the language, or even acknowledge the language – but to respect other people's decision to be able to read, speak and write the language of their choice – whether it is Welsh or English.

**Niclas ApGlyn,
Penarth**

IT is certainly not lunacy to have bilingual signs in Wales; however GEM letter writer Ms Bailey is correct in highlighting the cost.

It is essential that all children in Wales learn English, otherwise their life prospects would be severely curtailed by not being able to do so. They would be limited to living and working in Wales.

It is also desirable, and legally required, that the Welsh language is kept as a living language within the Principality.

The problem is that bilingualism costs money to support. This means money that perhaps ought to be spent on providing and supporting public services, has to be spent on ensuring that both languages are available and taught throughout Wales.

Significant amounts of money could be saved if

'Why all this talk of money being wasted on Welsh?'

WHAT is all this talk of money spent on Welsh being wasteful? I pay my taxes to have official information in my own language (Welsh) in my own country.

It seems to have been forgotten that Welsh is the language of the Britons. Do those individuals making derogatory remarks about the Welsh language also call themselves Britons? If so, they are using the name fraudulently.

As regards pronouncing Welsh place names, this takes only a little instruction. I can't believe that those complaining lack the intelligence and initiative to do this, not to mention the good manners.

**Niclas ApGlyn,
Penarth**

Welsh farmers are at a disadvantage

IWRITE to express the anger, frustration and disappointment of farmers across Wales that our Government has made the unilateral decision to place Welsh farmers at a significant competitive disadvantage, compared to farmers in the rest of the UK and Europe.

The decision made last week by the Minister, Alun Davies, was to siphon away nearly £300m from the bottom line of Welsh agriculture over the next seven years.

He says that this money will be spent on rural activity, but as yet he has no plan on how or where it will be spent.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is meant to be just that, a common policy across Europe to ensure food security and maintain the highest production standards.

The decision by our Minister to take a greater proportion of support

away from Welsh farmers than that being taken in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, France and Germany, effectively means that our Minister has decided to take the Common out of CAP – and I fear could see food production exported out of Wales to other areas of the UK and Europe – where their governments continue to back farmers and farming.

Farmers are the backbone to rural life in Wales; we provide the production base, we support a multi-billion pound food and drink industry and we produce meat, milk and crops to world leading standards whilst at the same time caring for and enhancing our treasured landscape.

The Minister continually highlights the conversation he wants with farmers. Farmers throughout Wales, as part of these conversations, have expressed their opposition to modulation.

Welsh farmers are now quite rightly asking what is the purpose of a conversation if one decides not to listen.

**Ed Bailey,
president, NFU Cymru.**

households were asked by public bodies whether they wish to receive hard copy information in English or Welsh.

As far as I know, the UK Government does not give Wales any more money to cover the costs of bilingualism, so these additional costs have to be met at the expense of services such as health, education and welfare.

There is another issue affecting employment in Wales. When I first moved to Wales 30 years ago, the adverts for senior managers in public bodies emphasised the professional skills required to do the job and specified that knowledge of Welsh was desirable.

If you look at the adverts and job specifications today they now, largely, specify that the ability to speak Welsh is essential.

So a prime requirement for a senior management position in a public body in Wales automatically eliminates anyone who was educated elsewhere in the UK.

Is this a case of positive discrimination to further emphasise the separateness of Wales from the rest of the UK and Europe and does it guarantee high-quality leadership of major bodies?

**David Kennett,
Cowbridge.**

Wrong to praise council spending

INOTE that the leader Neil Moore and the Vale Council have been awarded a plaque and certificate, from Diverse Excellence Cymru for the recent renovations to the council chamber, which cost taxpayers over £248,000.

This, at a time when we are seeing a massive increase in the number of Vale residents using Foodbanks.

What about the cuts

**DJ Radford,
Barry.**

we can expect in 2014, the predicted council tax increase, and all those residents who have been hit by the 'bedroom tax' and face being evicted from their homes because they have lost benefits?

It is offensive for a body like the DEC to praise councils for spending taxpayers' money on useless projects, when so many people are struggling to live on basics day by day.

**DJ Radford,
Barry.**

Make a resolution to help the Guide Dogs

DO you make a New Year's Resolution, only to break it within days? This year, why not set yourself a more realistic target – and help Guide Dogs into the bargain.

'Give It Up For Guide Dogs' is a campaign that encourages people to give up something they love – such as chocolate, cakes or alcohol – for the whole month of January.

You'll feel even better when friends and family sponsor your efforts, and you give the money to Guide Dogs.

There are currently more than 250 working guide dogs in Wales, many of them in Bridgend and the Vale,

and the lifetime cost for each one is estimated at just under £50,000. By Giving It Up For Guide Dogs, you can help us continue our life-changing work, bringing independence and safe mobility to many more blind and partially sighted people.

For more inspiration on what you could Give Up For Guide Dogs, and to download a sponsor form, log on to www.guidedogs.org.uk/ndraifeforus or call 0870 600 23 23.

Alternatively, you can set up an online giving page at Just Giving – simply search for 'Give It Up For Guide Dogs' under Guide Dogs events.

**JONATHAN MUDD,
mobility team manager,
Guide Dogs Cymru.**

PENARTH AND DISTRICT RAMBLERS' ROUND-UP

Wizards, dragons and robins were our festive companions!

RAMBLERS

Festival of Winter Walks has taken in the festive season, and Geraint and his sheepdog Patch played host on two walks before Christmas.

On the shortest day of 2013, seven members enjoyed a walk taking in Castell Coch, the Taff Trail and a zigzag climb up to Craig yr Allt in glorious winter sunshine.

Robins serenaded them at Caerphilly Mountain, while a herd of cows paddled in the mud looking very soulful and their return was made taking in the delights of the carved sculpture trail in Fforest Fawr, complete with wizards and dragons!

Geraint's second walk attracted the wind and rain and only two people as they trekked along the cliff top at Penarth, as what was predicted to be a leisurely simple local stroll turned into a battle against the elements.

Following the Wales Coast Path, some shelter was gained from hedges above the grey and choppy Bristol Channel and as the showers grew heavier, the trio turned inland at Lavernock Point, making their way along Fort Road to reach Cosmeston Country Park which was almost deserted.

Their return was made up the old disused Taff Vale railway track back to Penarth cliff top for a steaming cuppa before the journey home.

After Christmas on a

The Friends and Neighbours enjoy festive fun

FRIENDS and Neighbours ended their very successful year with their Christmas party at Beryl Road Pioneer Hall, in Barry.

The party was made possible due to sponsorship by Barry Rotary Club, Aberthaw Power Station and Renishaw. Jane Hutt AM joined over 56 members at a festive four-course lunch followed by mince pies and a glass of wine.

The tables were tastefully decorated with crackers etc as well as the room decorated with trimmings.

Entertainment was provided by Barry Male Voice Choir, who sang

carols and popular songs and the audience showed their appreciation.

Ms Hutt thanked Gay Fifield and the team for all their hard work. Alun Cairns MP later joined the party and praised the volunteers.

They were also entertained by Rev Malcolm Davies, with an amusing talk on hats he had collected from all over the world.

The group now take a break till February but are looking forward to the visit to New Theatre Pantomime to see Jack and the Beanstalk.

Further information from coordinator Gay Fifield (01446 400044).

Readers' Letters

IMPORTANT! We reserve the right to edit all letters. We do NOT accept anonymous mail. LETTERS AND EMAILS MUST INCLUDE FULL ADDRESS AND A CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER. AN EMAIL ADDRESS ALONE IS NOT SUFFICIENT! We will (in certain circumstances) protect a writer's identity, if requested. Please keep your letters BRIEF and address them to: The Editor, DON JOHN, at Glamorgan GEM Ltd, Graig House, 53 Eastgate, Cowbridge CF71 7E OR email gemeditorial@tindlenews.co.uk

'It's not lunacy... but bilingual signs costly'

IT is certainly not lunacy to have bilingual signs in Wales; however GEM letter writer Ms Bailey is correct in highlighting the cost.

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Pupils keep busy as year ends



Group sees church marvels being restored

BETWEEN
Christmas and New Year in 1992, St Donats Church was the scene of a crime which caught the imagination of the media, and was reported in the national press.

Three oil paintings on oak panels, forming a triptych portraying three generations of the Stradling family of St Donats Castle, with some of their history, and commissioned by the youngest of them in 1560, were stolen and a fire started. The triptych had hung in the church for hundreds of years.

Specialist police and a forensic team were quickly alerted, and the paintings were located in Cardiff under a mattress, obviously awaiting transfer. The paintings then went to the National Museum and were later on display, but were seen to deteriorate out of the very damp vestry atmosphere.

This autumn the Rector was informed that the museum had received a grant from the Pilgrim Trust to restore them, and conservator Charles Reed would be working on them two days a week, under the supervision of Adam Webster, head of the art conservation department.

Some members of St Donats congregation were invited to see the progress, and a group were treated to a fascinating insight into the work in progress.

Charles explained that Protestant Tudor portraits were intended to show power and stability, hence the ances-

Report: Lynda Clarke

Photos: Heather March.



The group were able to sit close to the paintings and see the wonderful brushwork and detail being revealed; for example, the embroidery on Lady Agnes's sleeve and armour in the centre painting.

The visit was thrilling, and the staff gave the group a wonderful presentation.

Mr Reed will give a public talk when the work is completed in September.

St Donats has life-sized photos of the paintings on display which are one feature of this beautiful Grade 1 church.

END OF TERM NEWS ROUND-UP FROM YSGOL GYFUN BRO MORGANNWG

Llangrannog
LAST month, year-7 pupils set off on their journey west to Llangrannog. They had a week filled with fun and activities, although it's hard to say if it was the children or teachers who enjoyed it the most!

URDD

swim gala
ON Wednesday, December 4, a group from YGBM went to Cogan Leisure Centre, Penarth, for the URDD swimming gala.

It was a full day of competition with excellent results at the end of which we came home with a total of 12 prizes – eight firsts, one second, and three thirds.

Rotary Youth Speaks

ON Wednesday, December 11, the Rotary Youth Speaks public speaking competition was held at the school. Despite only teams from YGBM taking part there was still plenty of competition.

Congratulations to the

following winners:
Junior: Best speaker – Arwel Thomas. Best chair – Llinos Jones. Best vote of thanks – Twm Aled.

Senior: Best speaker – Lois Aled. Best chair – Leah Robinson. Best vote of thanks – Nia Brown.

The winning teams will now go on to the next round. Junior – Brennig Davies, Tirion Davies, Llinos Jones. Topic: Is society and the media defining our gender identities?

Senior – Lois Aled, Nia Brown, Nia Fenn. Topic: Is it time for us to stop 'horsing around'? Should we be searching for new meat alternatives in the wake of the horsemeat scandal?

BTEC visit

ON Thursday, December 12, a group of year-10 boys from the BTEC SWEET course went on a trip to Llandow for a session with a driving instructor.

They had an interesting morning with Ian Wilcox of 'I Will Drive School of Motoring' who discussed all aspects of running and driving a car.

He started by discussing the costs of run-



ning a car, up to £4,000 on average in the first year between the costs of lessons, insurance and buying a car. Upon hearing this, the boys were eager to start looking for a Saturday job!

Next came a lesson on car maintenance – checking the oil, water, tyres etc and also the responsibilities of being a driver.

Last, but not least, what everyone was looking forward to the most – driving the car on the track at Llandow air strip.

B-r-r-ro Morgannwg!

AFTER school on Friday, December 13, a hardy group of over 50

staff and sixth formers braved the waters of Barry Island in aid of our chosen charity LATCH.

Thank you to Starbucks, Dunleavy Drive, for their contribution of coffee which was much appreciated!

Christmas Jumper Day
ON Friday, December 13, Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg and Ysgol Gymraeg Nant Talwg both took part in the annual Save the Children 'Christmas Jumper Day'.

There was an array of jumpers sported by pupils and staff, between the two schools a total of £540 was raised, which

National Children's Orchestra

IT is with great pleasure we announce that Anwen Fardy, year-9, has been selected for the National Children's Orchestra of Great Britain 2014, the second year running she has been chosen.

Anwen was also successful in the recent regional Rotary Young Musician competition and will now go on to the South Wales round in March. Da iawn Anwen.

CROWDS OUT IN FORCE TO SEE THE BOXING DAY HUNT IN COWBRIDGE

MORE than 100 horses and ponies rode down Cowbridge High Street on Boxing Day, and as these pictures by Mike Wilcock (MW) and Glyn Evans (GE) show, there were hundreds of spectators there to see them.



Santas galore, carols, and a Jumper Day!



Photos by
SCOTT
NELSON.

Santa Zumba For Shelter Cymru at
Barry Comprehensive School.



Back to the Coda - 'Driving home for Christmas'.

Carol concert
STUDENTS and their families joined staff and governors for Barry Comprehensive School's annual Christmas carol service at St Mary's Church, Holton Road last week.

The large congregation were treated to a selection of traditional and modern hymns, songs and music, all performed to the music department's high standard. Students and teachers also gave traditional readings during the service.

We would like to thank everyone who made this very enjoyable festive celebration possible.

Jumper Day
STUDENTS and staff at Barry Comprehensive joined in with Save the Children's 'Christmas Jumper Day' event.

School jumpers were decorated with tinsel, baubles and lights or swapped entirely for a woolly with a festive theme. Participants had their photos taken in the



Rhys reading
'The Night Before
Christmas'.



Iestyn reading 'Every
Day is Christmas'.

Christmas grotto and made donations to Save the Children totalling £300.

A huge thank you to Mr Piekielniak for organising an excellent event: a choir greeted staff in reception and sang for them at break-time. Also thanks to the art department for their festive bunting and to Mrs Edwards for constructing the grotto.

Santa Zumba
ON Wednesday, December 18, students from Barry Comprehensive challenged the stereotype by taking on Zumba. Andrea Jones took the

boys through their paces teaching them Latin hand and hip action.

Then we had a surprise performance from the in-house performers of 'What Did the Fox Say?'. This brought the house down again.

A huge thank you to Andrew Jones (Shelter Cymru) and to Sean Mayor, who organised the whole event. As a school, we are keen to continue to support Shelter Cymru in its commitment to keeping people in their homes.

AC



Miss Walters,
Mr Piekielniak
and students.

Who
wants to
build
what, and
where?

Mr Robert Williams –
Keepers Cottage,
Llandough –
Alterations and extension to include single storey garage and off road parking access.

Mr Andrew Williams –
Redlands Court Farm,
Five Mile Lane,
Bonvilston – Provision of private stables.

CTIL and Telefonica UK Ltd – Land at Port Road East, Barry – Installation of a replacement 15m high streetworks monopole with replacement ground based equipment.

Mr Lance Carver –
Woodlands ATC,
Woodlands Road, Barry – Complete demolition.

MA Hardy Ltd – New Farm, Port Road,
Rhosneigr – Farmworker's dwelling.

Mr Peter Hayman –
Lettons House, Lettons Way, Dinas Powys – Removal of condition 1 of approval 2011/00503/FUL, regarding occupancy of the property.

Mr Neil Moakson –
The Extension, Lower Beaupre House, St Hilary – Single dwelling house.

Orchard House enjoys carols with local groups



ABOVE: president-elect Robin Pitcher with Rotarians, Inner Wheel members and residents of Orchard House.

MEMBERS of the Rotary Club of Barry and Inner Wheel came together on the evening of December 17, for a carol service with the residents of Orchard House, off Colcot Road, Barry.

Rotary Club president-elect, Mr. Robin Pitcher, welcomed everyone on this special evening.

After the opening carol, 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing', Rotarian Mike Righton read a few verses from the Bible.

Pianist for the evening was Rotarian Meirion Evans who had also prepared the evening's programme.

Other carols included 'Once in Royal David's City', 'It Came Upon the Midnight Clear', 'Silent Night', and 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'.

These were interspersed with two humorous items read by Inner Wheel members Mrs Eryl Evans and Mrs

Beth Longley, and a musical contribution from Katy Brownjohn and her friend Lily.

Father Christmas also made a surprise appearance as everyone sang 'Jingle Bells!' After the final carol, 'Hark the Herald Angels Sing,' president elect Robin thanked the residents and staff of Orchard House for such a warm welcome and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Members of the Rotary Club of Barry are part of an international organization with one million members worldwide, forming a global network of business, professional and community volunteers.

The Rotary Club of Barry meets weekly in the Mount Sorrel Hotel on Thursdays (6pm for 6.30pm). If you would like further information, please contact Peter Battle on 01446 710204, or visit www.rbi.org

JILL OSBORNE



ABOVE: Josh, Brendan, Jordan, Mr Davies and Ben.



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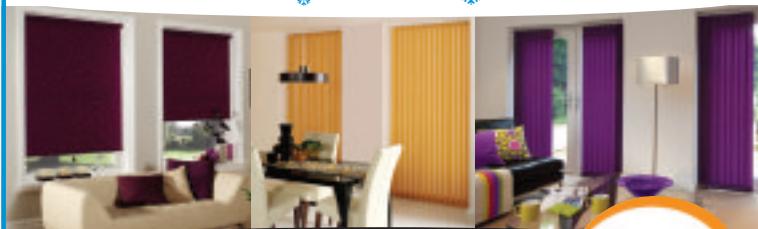
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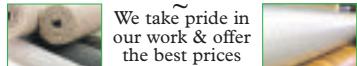
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Birthdays

Happy 18th Birthday!
Elle Gwatin
on 8th January 2014
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Mum, Dad, Louie & Ronnie xxx

Family Notices

SAVAGE Margaret
Passed away peacefully on the 18th December 2013. Loving mother to Carolyn, Julian & Tim. Loving mother-in-law to John and Julie. Beloved grandmother to Rachel, Huw, Joe & Sam and great grandmother to Noah & Sebastian. Funeral Service to be held at Cardiff and Glamorgan Memorial Park Crematorium, Port Road, Barry on Wednesday 8th January at 1.30pm. Family flowers only please, donations if desired, may be made to Alzheimer's Society, Devon House, 58 St Katharine's Way, London E1W 1LB. All enquires to Green Willow Funerals, 21a Station Road, Dinas Powys, CF64 4DE. Tel (029) 2051 4627.

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WHO WANTS TO BUILD WHAT, AND WHERE?

Newydd Housing Association - **Old Station Yard, St Athan** - Demolition and redevelopment of former car park to provide 23 affordable dwellings, creation of public open space, access, and associated works.

Mr Ken Broad - **13A Atlantic Trading Estate, Barry** - Demolition of existing lock up facility and erection of new industrial premises split into four separate units.

Mr Philip Salter - **6 Jenkinsville, Penarth** - Erection of rear glazed garden room.

Mr N Tsitsianis - **70 Lewis Road, Llandough** - Detached dwelling.

CIL and Vodafone - **Streetworks off Clive Place, Penarth** - Removal of the existing Vodafone 3G only MTA 16m mock telegraph pole mast (11.6m to top of antenna shroud) and its replacement in the same location with a 15m (to top of antenna shroud) Hutchinson T-Range mock telegraph pole; removal of one 3107 equipment cabinet and installation of two Huawei 3900AL equipment cabinets, one Huawei Duplexor Cabinet and one Alifabs JSC cabinet; to enable the base station or provide shareable 2G, 3G and 4G RF coverage for Vodafone in accordance with Assembly Government

policy.

Mr Tim Matthews - **Limefield House, Cross Ways, Cowbridge** - Proposed single and two storey extensions and conservatory to dwelling; proposed garage to replace existing outbuildings.

Mrs H Jeffries - **Plot 160, The Hedgerows, White Farm, Barry** - Proposed alteration of approved dwelling to include rear conservatory extension.

Mr Vlad Dudko - **99-100 High Street, Barry** - External insulation to the building.

WE Morgan and Sons - **Penuchadre Farm, Wick Road, St Brides Major** - Installation of two farm scale wind turbines, with a maximum tip height of 42 metres, associated infrastructure and access track.

Mrs Catherine Maitland Evans - **5 Countess Place, Penarth** - Single storey rear extension and new garden store.

Mr and Mrs Thomas - **29 Clevedon Avenue, Sully** - Demolition of existing detached property and garage.

Construction of new detached dwelling and garage.

Vale of Glamorgan Council - **Holton Road Primary School, Holton Road, Barry** - Creation of an accessible

entrance to the Flying Start feeder unit; minor modifications to school building to allow for integration to Flying Start and the school building.

Mrs Mandy Terry - **Low Fell, City, Llansannor, Cowbridge** - Proposed garage conversion and extension.

Dr I S and Mrs M L Thomas - **Greenway Cottage, Greenway Lane, Bonvilston** - Proposed two storey extension to form living room and master bedroom to first floor.

Mr Thomas Salter - **17 Clive Place, Penarth** - Removal of boundary wall and creation of off road parking for two vehicles.

Mr Dean Caddy - **15 St Lethans Road, Barry** - Proposed demolition of existing garage, new single storey extension to form elderly/disabled accommodation.

Mr Michael Farley - **9 Augusta Road, Penarth** - Alteration and extensions including demolition of existing rear single storey and chimney stack, and construction of rear two storey extension.

Simon Toner and Marina John - **20 Lakeside, Barry** - Certificate of Lawfulness for work on property.

Kent Property Services - **Downcross, Turkey Street, Llantwit Major** - Renovation and extension to listed cot-

tage to rear of Downcross House to form new four-bed dwelling.

Lloyds Banking Group - **1 Windsor Road, Penarth** - Alterations to existing stepped entrance into bank branch to form a level platform at finished floor level, with the installation of a DDA compliant low rise platform lift for wheelchair users.

Dr Paul Bridges - **Red House, 60 Victoria Road, Penarth** - Replacement of uPVC windows and reinstatement of chimney stack (non-functioning).

Mr D Laskey and Mrs M Bland - **Land at Cross Common Road, Dinas Powys** - Access to field including gate.

Mr Malcolm Evans - **Treetops, Romilly Park, Barry** - Proposal to construct double storey extension to side of existing dwelling.

Amethyst Healthcare - **228 Barry Road, Barry** - Rear and side extension including loft accommodation to new extension to accommodate care home for four young adults.

Namular Pension Trustees Limited - **38 Windsor Road, Penarth** - Change of use from Class A1 (shops) to Class A3 (Hot Food Takeaway) and external alterations, including the installation of ventilation extraction equipment.

Tesco Stores Ltd - **Culverhouse Cross, Cardiff** - Installation of dry cleaning, key cutting, shoe and watch repairs pod to Class 1 retail premises.

Mr Steve Davies - **1 Greenfield Avenue, Dinas Powys** - New single storey extension.

Mr and Mrs Richard and Rachel Disley - **34 Robinswood Crescent, Penarth** - Rear extension, garage conversion, and part loft conversion.

Waitrose Ltd - **Birds Lane, Cowbridge** - External cafe banners and stainless steel support posts.

Mr Peter Loch - **Glebe Farm, St Hilary** - Proposed single storey extensions to side, front and rear; proposed garage; erection of polytunnels and solar panels.

Mr Guy Leach - **The Old Post Office, 61-63 Eastgate, Cowbridge** - Demolition of a section of existing building in association with the development of two two-bedroom apartments in lieu of approved four-bedroom house in old post office building, plus associated parking and private amenity space.

CADETS HEAD FOR THE BRIGHT LIGHTS... London, here we come!

RIGHT:
The Cadets have had a busy end to 2013!



WHAT a fantastic end to the year for 2117 (Kenfig Hill) Squadron RAF Air Cadets!

At the beginning of December in the capable hands of Flt Sgt (ATC) Kevin Gould and Sgt (ATC) Richard Peckham, cadets from Kenfig Hill, Aberkenfig and Porthcawl went on a nine-day educational visit to London.

There was an extra pair of helping hands this year as Mrs Gould, who has recently joined the civilian committee, accompanied the group.

While staying at RAF Northolt, they ventured into London on several visits.

They thoroughly enjoyed the week, visiting the Imperial War Museum, Chelsea Pensioners' gardens, and war memorials in and around London; Jewel Tower, Science Museum, and National Army Museum.

While visiting the Queen's Colour Squadron, they were taught some drill movements, which is always an asset.

They also visited the Imperial War Museum, Duxford, which houses one of the finest collections of tanks, military vehicles and large exhibits in the country.

A lot of walking was involved and on one day

the party walked around Hyde Park and looked at some of the memorials before going to Piccadilly Circus and then back to Nelson's Column.

With the help of Madeleine Moon MP, the cadets visited No 10 Downing Street and the Houses of Parliament where they had a full tour of both Houses with a talk on how Parliament works, and also got to stand where the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition stand during Prime Minister's Questions!

Staff and cadets from Kenfig Hill, Aberkenfig and Porthcawl, would like to thank the following people without whom this trip would not have been possible:

Pyle and Kenfig Hill British Legion, Porthcawl and Kenfig Hill RAFA Club, Wick Van Hire, Cowbridge ATC, Mrs Madeleine Moon MP - and, most of all, the people in the service and civilians who work at RAF Northolt who took time to look after the party while they were in London.

LT

CADS CHAIRMAN STEPPING DOWN

RIGHT:
Kay, Gerda and The Snow Queen.

LONG-STANDING chairman of Cowbridge's dramatic society - Coun Peter Knapp - has announced that he will be standing down, following his elevation to Mayor-designate of Cowbridge with Llanblethian Council.

Peter said: "I am confident that the society will remain in good hands and we have lined up some great shows for 2014, including the comedies *God of Carnage* and *The 39 Steps*, which are described in a new booklet entitled 'What's On' at CADS, available from the Library in Old Hall Gardens.

"First, though, we are fortunate to have the Rain or Shine to Cowbridge have been dogged by snow, ice or monsoon rains but this time the Snow Queen herself has promised all will be well with the weather - subject to change of course...



between 6 and 106.

"This is a new adaptation by award-winning director James Reynard of the classic Hans Andersen tale of good triumphing over evil in a snowy land. Tickets are available from WG Davies in the High Street, or by phoning 01446 773874.

"The show (one night only) which has been touring to excellent reviews commences at 7pm in the Market Theatre (off the Butts) Cowbridge."

Previous visits of Rain or Shine to Cowbridge have been dogged by snow, ice or monsoon rains but this time the Snow Queen herself has promised all will be well with the weather - subject to change of course...

THE Christmas meeting of the Glamorgan Farmers' Golf Society held recently at RAF St Athan Golf Club attracted 36 competitors, all competing for the usual seasonal prizes and also the opportunity to return home with the RAF Shield which the winning member retains for the next 12 months.

Prior to arriving at the first tee the members were treated to a delightful drop of Irish Whiskey and home-made shortbread biscuits which Mrs Leslie Thomas, wife of society captain Gwyn Thomas, provided.

This very generous seasonal treat was much appreciated and set the tone for what proved to be a most enjoyable event.

In a closely contested competition the final outcome was deci-

Maesteg Mayor dives into the icy waters – all for charity!



Coun Ross Thomas, the Mayor of Maesteg, took part in the Porthcawl Christmas Day swim - wearing a 1920s traditional bathing costume! He told The GEM: "With the help of my charity committee (above), we raised around £1,800 for Maesteg Community Day Hospital and the Maesteg 3rd Scouts Group."

Seasonal action for Farmers!

ed with Aubrey Bowen having a better back nine than Clive Thomas.

Standing on the 16th tee Clive had a commanding six point lead over his nearest rivals, but a disastrous finish by Clive who only scored one point on the last three holes proved costly.

Both Clive and Aubrey finished with 32 stableford points with Aubrey having one more point on the back nine than Clive.

In third place was Tony McCarthy with 31 points followed by Geraint Davies who scored 30 points. Llancadog farmer David Williams, making an extremely quick return to action after being hospitalised recently as a result of losing an argument with a tree, finished in fifth place also with 30 points.

Nearest the pin on the par three holes were Martin David, Andrew Thomas, Clive Thomas and also Mike Lee, whose round was interrupted when a deflated tyre on a

buggy he was sharing with Lyn Thomas attracted a few seasonal comments!

Dan Jarvis, not for the first time, hit the longest drive on the selected hole to win the Bear Hotel, Cowbridge sponsored prize.

Martin Edwards, enjoying a rare Thursday off from exercising hounds, correctly guessed 31 balls would fail to return home to collect the premier Turf sponsored bottle of whiskey raising £70 in the process for the Llantwit Major Lifeguards.

The society's next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 30 at Whitchurch Golf Club, Cardiff and will be sponsored by Llanharan Concrete Company Ltd.

The captain and committee members of The Glamorgan Farmers' Golf Society wish fellow golfers and readers of this column a very happy New Year.

TMC

Did you know you can now find The GEM on Twitter? For all your news from the Vale follow us @gem_news

COWBRIDGE COMPREHENSIVE SPORTS ROUND-UP

Treble glory for 5x60 badminton!

AFTER storming to victory in the Badminton key stage 4 competition, it was the turn of the junior boys' team to take centre stage.

The venue once again was Cogan Leisure Centre in Penarth and although the journey there took longer than expected, this wasn't enough to take focus off the job in hand.

The team of Will Stewart, Evan Thomas, Harry Donnithorne and Michael Cox were ready to bring the silverware home.

First opponents for Cowbridge were Barry Comprehensive who provided plenty of passion. Will and Evan comfortably won their singles matches, with Harry and Michael following up with calm and collected triumph in their doubles.

The final doubles matches saw Will paired

with Harry and Michael paired with Evan, with both partnerships easing to comfortable wins to make the overall match score 5-0.

This trend continued in games against Llantwit Major, Stanwell, Bro Morgannwg and St Richard Gwyn, with Cowbridge comfortably topping the round robin group.

In second place were Stanwell, who would be Cowbridge's opponents in the final. Will Stewart and Evan Thomas got the team off to the perfect start with convincing wins in the singles.

Nerves got the better of Michael and Harry, who unfortunately lost a tight doubles game, to make the score 2-1, going into the final two matches.

Victories in the concluding matches made the final score 4-1 and Cowbridge were proud to regain the trophy they lost to their opponents

last year.

After last year's team won the national 5x60 badminton competition, the junior girls team of Kate Workman, Freya Johnson, Rhian Crossman and Abby Johnson had a great deal to live up to this time round. However, they arrived at the venue confident, calm and ready for action.

Their first opponents were St Richard Gwyn, who have a strong reputation for producing talented badminton players.

On this occasion Cowbridge were too strong and they triumphed 4-1.

Second up were Llantwit Major who brought a youthful side to the tournament. The difference in age groups showed as Cowbridge comfortably achieved victory 5-0.

The final group game was against Stanwell who beat the senior girls in the final of the key stage 4 competition.

However, this time round the Cowbridge team, full of confidence, ran out 5-0 winners, retaining the trophy.

Three out of the four teams entered now move into the south east region tournament, being held during the spring term.

Expectations are high but all three teams will need to move up a gear to beat the incoming teams from Cardiff, Bridgend, RCT and Merthyr.

After an unsuccessful venture to the national finals last year, the boys' badminton team of Sam Stewart, Matthew Reynolds, Finn Murphy and Josh Evans have returned to competition with devastating effect, determined to right the wrongs of the previous campaign.

The first port of call was the Vale of Glamorgan 5x60 tournament and having won the competition for the previous two years, the biggest threat to a third straight title must have

been complacency. The first opponents were a competitive St Cyres outfit, sporting new faces and a determination not seen in previous years.

After a difficult start,

Sam Stewart's quality

shone through and he

delivered the first of a 4-1 team win, with Josh Evans combining passion and skill to win his two matches.

Next up were a very competitive Stanwell team, who are widely renowned for their proficiency with a racket. However, on this day, those abilities fell well short of the standards set by a resolute and unwavering Cowbridge team.

Having blown away the cobwebs against St Cyres, the flair and elegance of Matthew Reynolds combined with

Finn Murphy and Josh Evans resulted in a resounding 5-0 victory.

Last up during the group stage was a youthful and inexperienced Llantwit team, who

although looked out of their depth, put in a gritty and heroic performance to try and deny a rampaging Cowbridge side.

Unfortunately for Llantwit, Cowbridge were in an unforgiving mood and again steamrollered their opponents

on the way to the final with another 5-0 win.

The final brought Cowbridge head to head with St Richard Gwyn who also comfortably won their group, albeit a slightly easier task.

The gulf in class was obvious from the outset with Sam Stewart and Matthew Ayres securing victory in a convincing manner.

Finn and Josh followed this up with another win in the doubles and with a 3-0 lead the squad eased to the title, winning the last two doubles matches.

The team now advance to the south east competition at Cogan Leisure Centre in Penarth, hoping to emulate last year's championship winning performance.

On this performance their chances of doing that look good.

Player of the match: Jake Thomas and Matthew Dewhurst.

ROWING

The Year 7 football

CL



ABOVE: The year 7 football team, who have qualified for the Welsh Cup

Comprehensive at the Welsh Schools Indoor Rowing Championships on December 6, held at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff.

Despite being a very windy and cold afternoon, all girls played exceptionally well. The year 9s won 11-1, and the year 8s won 4-1.

Player of the match: year 9 - Annabelle Hegarty, year 8 - Mali Howell.

HOCKEY

The under-16 hockey team played against Brynteg.

Cowbridge won 3-0 with goals being scored by Sian Smith, Jemma Viney and Rosa Hartmann. Player of the match was Genevieve Kirk.

Team: Hannah Lee, Megan Duncombe, Laurie Thomas, Marlie Adams, Hannah Lister-Sims, Hannah Clarke, Ellie Eddy-Williams, Megan McNamee, Evie Williams, Jemma Viney, Rosa Hartmann, Sian Smith and Genevieve Kirk.

Badminton's talent on show

THE annual 5x60 badminton tournament was once again held at Cogan Leisure Centre in Penarth.

Fierce rivalries were destined to be resumed during this year's competition with Stanwell School in particular renowned for their aptitude with a racket.

Interesting to see was the depth of talent being turned out by the Vale schools, with many players performing to a very high standard and this made for very competitive tournaments at both age groups.

In the 5 x 60 events, each team of four players played two singles matches and three doubles matches, in a best of five contests.

A special mention should be made for the 10 volunteers from Cardiff and Vale College who umpired the competition and ensured it ran smoothly from the outset.

Season ends at Kart club

LLANDOW Kart Club brought the curtain down on its 2013 season with the traditional Celtic Challenge finale on the opening weekend of December.

Run to the 'alternate' format' of timed qualifying, heat, pre-final and final, the event is designed to bring a fun end to a hard year of racing, while providing an opportunity for the winners to leave with the recognised 'CC' plate, which is retained for the following year.

Two hardy Bambinos came out to play at the event, with Ella Stevens and Nathan Browning both achieving another gold award for their efforts on a cold and damp track.

Despite it being the 'end of term', the Cadet field still produced the biggest turn-out, with 20 karts taking to the track across three classes. New club champion Ethan Ling headed up the Honda contingent, but was denied another title as Stuart Ferguson emerged as the one to beat, topping all four sessions to take a clean sweep.

Ling was second fastest in qualifying, but had to settle for third place in each of the three races, as Oscar Ferguson took second spot in both the heat and pre-qualifying, and Joshua Martin did likewise in the final, after Ferguson ran into misfortune.

Without new champion Tom Rawlings, who took the opportunity to step up to another class in preparation for 2014, the Comer class was won by Connor Kearney, who came good in the races after lagging a little behind his rivals in the timed session.

Max Fenlon had been quickest in qualifying, but did not make the top three overall, as Kieran Clarke and Thomas Nippers followed Kearney home.

The IAME class featured just two runners, with Shay Keough getting the better of Ethan Rees.

With new champion Cristiano Nardone and otherwise dominant Ben Stevens both graduating to the senior ranks, Junior Honda was reduced to just three drivers,

and Kristian Prosser wasted little time in taking control, topping each of the day's four sessions, ahead of Tom Ford and Patrick Hill.

As he had in the final round of the summer championship, Ford doubled up with appearances in Junior Rotax, where he again locked horns with former Honda rival Thomas Croydon.

The pair had to settle for battling over third and fourth places, however, as the more experienced Rob Ellis and Ceran Sokhi - stepping up from Minimax - set the pace.

Ellis, as befits the role of club champion, came out on top each time, winning each race with an increased margin.

With Sokhi stepping up and Jodie Handford missing, Joe Pritchard was the lone Minimax entrant, but raced hard at the back of the Junior Rotax grid.

The eight-man Junior TKM field was led throughout by Ryan Edwards, despite the best efforts of old rivals Scott Morris and Matthew Ayres, who filled the podium positions in each session.

Class debutant Rawlings made an immediate impact, qualifying fifth fastest and racing hard to eventually claim fourth in the main event, beating 2013 Welsh and club champion Yousuf Ashraf in the process.

After a tough year, where a dearth of entries saw the class cancelled on more than a couple of occasions, Senior Honda enjoyed a return to double figures for the season finale, with no fewer than 12 karts on track.

The numbers were swelled by the arrival of Stevens and Nardone from the junior ranks, as well as the return of veterans Chris Lipscomb, Nick Turley and Nicholas Rees and a seasonal debut for Roberto Nardone.

Stevens dared to beat Lipscomb and challenge senior champion Paul Saunders in qualifying, and then proved that his form was for real by winning the pre-final, but had to give best to heat winner Turley when it mattered most. Despite that, the youngster still left with some silverware, while Monty Gorringe beat Saunders to the final step of

the podium.

The Honda Heavyweight class returned courtesy of Hugh Jones, but there was to be no repeat of his October heroics - where he won outright - as he finished seventh overall.

Senior Rotax remained in double figures after another strong season, and Daryl Henderson picked up from where he had left off in November's championship finale, winning all three races after topping qualifying.

James Johnson proved to be the biggest thorn in Henderson's side, taking second spot in each session, and, when Steven Handford failed to start the pre-final, it opened the door for Zach Jones to establish himself as number three for the rest of the day.

RESULTS

BAMBINO - Gold Award, Nathan Browning (CRG); Ella Stevens (CK).

CADET HONDA - 1, Stuart Ferguson (Project One); 2, Joshua Martin (Project One); 3, Ethan Ling (Project One).

CADET COMER - 1, Connor Kearney (Zip); 2, Kieran Clarke (Zip); 3, Thomas Nippers (Zip).

CADET IAME - 1, Shay Keough (Zip); 2, Ethan Rees (Zip).

JUNIOR HONDA - 1, Kristian Prosser (7Kart); 2, Tom Ford (MS); 3, Patrick Hill (Wright).

JUNIOR TKM - 1, Ryan Edwards (Tonykart); 2, Scott Morris (Tonykart); 3, Matthew Ayres (Jade).

JUNIOR ROTAX - 1, Rob Ellis (Kosmic); 2, Ceran Sokhi (Kosmic); 3, Thomas Croydon (Gillard).

MINI MAX - 1, Joe Pritchard (Tonykart).

SENIOR HONDA - 1, Nick Turley (MS); 2, Ben Stevens (7Kart); 3, Monty Gorringe (7Kart).

SENIOR HONDA HEAVY-WEIGHT - 1, Hugh Jones (MS).

SENIOR ROTAX - 1, Daryl Henderson (Gillard); 2, James Johnson; 3, Zach Jones.

BEST NOVICE - Dylan Dinham (Honda Cadet).

DRIVER OF THE DAY - Oscar Ferguson (Cadet Honda).

FOOTBALL - The Year 7 football

team were from Cowbridge.

In the year 7 and 8 boy's competition, the team from Stanwell took the runner up position with Cowbridge comfortably taking the top prize.

In the year 9 and 10 girls competition the runners up were Cowbridge with Stanwell deservedly taking first place.

The boy's competition was very hard fought, but again Cowbridge took first place with a very spirited St Richard Gwyn side in second.

The winners of each competition will now go through to play in the regional event where they will face stiff competition from teams from Merthyr, Cardiff and RCT.

The winners of each competition should be made for the 10 volunteers from Cardiff and Vale College who umpired the competition and ensured it ran smoothly from the outset.

ROWING

Tom Jose and Selina Radcliffe (both year 9) represented Cowbridge



YOUNG COACHES ARE LEARNING THE ROPES

THE Vale Council has launched an Olympic legacy programme, entitled Coaches of the Future, to help inspire a generation and give young people the opportunity to develop an involvement in sports leadership and coaching.

The scheme was launched at the Civic Offices in Barry with 19 individuals attending (age 16-18) from around the Vale.

The guest speaker was Great Britain and Wales athlete Rhys Williams, who gave an insight into how invaluable coaches were

in his success on the athletics track.

The coaches had already taken part in an intensive week of training during October half term. They completed their Level 2 in community sports leadership, first aid, netball leaders, badminton leaders and Dragon multi-skills training course.

All 19 of the COTF will now be volunteering in their secondary school, local primary school or community sports club.

They will have further training in the near future and will complete their coach education Level 1 in their chosen sports between now and April 2014.

Coun Gwyn John, cabinet member for leisure, parks, culture and sports development said: "The scheme provides an excellent opportunity for young people to get on the coaching ladder when they are young and to develop their knowledge of their sport to pass on to players and volunteers in the game."

"I have been a football coach for 40 years and I have enjoyed every moment of the experience of coaching and seeing the development and improvement of those I have worked with. I would encourage all young people to take the opportunities offered them and sign up today."

Who wants to build what, and where in the Vale?

Mr Chris Wood - 95 Main Street, Barry - Retention of ground floor flat.

Mr Terry Morgan - 24 Forrest Road, Penarth - Construction of new two-storey rear extension. New dormer bedroom window to front elevation.

Demolition of existing single storey flat roof extension.

Mr Alan Thomas - Great House Farm, Llanmaes - Agricultural steel framed building. Mr Ray Simkiss - Tyr Ardd, Llandough, Nr Cowbridge - Two storey extension providing bathroom and additional kitchen area.

Mr Barrie James - Cerd y Don, Ewenny Road, St Brides Major - Attached garage and single storey annexe extension.

Mr and Mrs Tayeb and Carolyn Mirza - 38 Longmeadow Drive, Dinas Powys - Single storey rear extension and internal remodelling.

Barry Island Junior and Infant School - Clive Road, Barry - Proposed new classroom structure/building to replace an existing outdoor shelter which is in a dangerous structural condition. Mrs Rhian Roberts - Rectory House, Peterston Super Ely - Waterproofing the basement area by placing a waterproof membrane on the walls and floor and placing two sumps

with pumps to pump the water out. The walls will remain unfinished and a T and G woodchip floor will be installed.

Mr Glynn Jones - Land at St Johns Well, St Athan - To extend time periods for the submission of reserved matters details and for the implementation of the permission.

Mr P Motte - United World College of the Atlantic, St Donat's Castle, St Donats - Internal alterations and refurbishment of the library, including general upgrade of all lighting, power sockets, and heating, the installation of an internal platform lift to gain disabled access to first floor of the castle, addressing the level of differences by introducing raised section of flooring and raising the height of an existing door opening, installation of single glazed minimal screens within three existing stone arched openings to provide separation between the main body of the library - and the proposed seminar area.

Mr Ian Beresford - Rose Cottage, Llanmaes - Proposed detached garage to store classic cars and to include an external log store and recycling area.

Mr Chapman - 5 Railway Terrace, Penarth - Usage for office administration.

Carlton Communications Ltd -

Land off Old Port Road, Culverhouse Cross (ITV) - Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of site for residential purposes.

Mr and Mr John Ellis - 2 Orchard Drive, Barry - Storage building with personal car and caravan storage on yard to rear of 2 Orchard Drive.

Dr Dominic Griffiths - Chapel View Barn, Clawd Coch, Nr Cowbridge -

Completion of conversion of garage to habitable space, specifically a laundry room.

Conversion of other two bays of garage undertaken in 2007 as a result of planning permission granted to previous owner.

Newydd Housing Association - 21 St Garmon Road, Penarth - proposed rear single storey extension/adaptation.

Ms Jo Fraser Jones - 42 Golwg y Coed, Barry - The construction of a single storey rear extension.

Mr and Mrs S Sherwood - 45 Althorpe Drive, Penarth - new extension to rear of property, to provide at ground floor, new cloakroom and WC, dining area and lounge and at first floor, new fourth master bedroom and ensuite bathroom.

Mr Chapman - 5 Railway Terrace, Penarth - Usage for office administration.

Mr Graham Oddy - Maesyd Farm, Llangan - Proposed glazed elongated walkway (forming link

between existing buildings).

Mr and Mrs Garan Trehearn - West Winds, Love Lane, Llanblethian - To replace the existing garage and outbuildings with a new garage and two storey side extension to provide master bedroom/ensuite with improved living accommodation at ground floor.

Michael A Davies - St Illtyd's Church, Llanllwch Major - Remove two Yew trees and one Palm tree.

Mr Will Parsons - Llanmaes House, Llanmaes - Turkey Oak, crown reduce by one third to reduce weight on heavy lateral branches and prune to a suitable growing point.

Mrs Audrey Preston - Kings Hall Court, Wick Road, St Brides Major - Proposed alterations and garage conversion to form granny annexe.

Mr and Mrs S Sherwood - 45 Althorpe Drive, Penarth - new extension to rear of property, to provide at ground floor, new cloakroom and WC, dining area and lounge and at first floor, new fourth master bedroom and ensuite bathroom.

Mr David Evans - Cardiff Boat Sales, Compass House, Penarth Marina, Penarth - Boat sales and coffee shop.

Mr John Gough - 8/9 Glebe Street, Penarth - Extension and refurbishment to provide two residential units.

Mr Graham Oddy - Maesyd Farm, Llangan - Proposed glazed elongated walkway (forming link

Peugeot's 2008 is an urban crossover

by TIM SAUNDERS

PEUGEOT calls its 2008 an urban crossover; a five-door estate that sits high off the road like a 4x4, but without the uneconomical permanent all-wheel-drive.

However, it's fitted with a grip control that features modes for mud, sand, snow and normal everyday driving, making it more agile than a standard car (watch the video at testdrives.biz).

This function provides much-needed traction to the front wheels when required.

It can also be cancelled at speeds of up to 30mph, giving the driver ultimate control.

I'm testing a 1.6 e-HDi Allure model, which is basically the mid-range offering.

Standard features include 16" alloy wheels, power folding chrome door mirrors, rear parking aid, dark tinted rear windows, stainless steel front and rear scuff plates, cruise control, speed limiter, all-around electric windows and air conditioning.

Parkers, the used car experts say: "Skid plates front and rear supplement more aggressively-styled alloy wheels, either in 16 or 17-inch sizes, sitting beneath squared-off wheel arches."

"A kink in the roof above the rear door evokes memories of an early Land Rover Discovery, though it embellishes the space with chrome rather than glass. It's a material used throughout the car's exterior."

"That familiar, and slightly fussy, Peugeot family face is adorned with a bold grille outlined in the shiny metal, as are the roof rails, door bottoms and wing mirrors.

It makes for a rather glitzy ambience to what could otherwise be considered a slightly derivative design statement."

Over the course of our time together we head into the New Forest, Hampshire and on into Dorset and Wiltshire, which provides ideal terrain for testing its abilities.

The concept is simple; Peugeot has created a more robust estate car that embraces the challenges that the modern family will throw at it - a family like the Saunders clan, which decides to take a few days out and have a well-earned rest at Sandy Balls, the self-catering holiday park in the New Forest.

That means loading



The Peugeot 2008

everything but the kitchen sink and although the boot is not large enough to accommodate our tandem pram it does tackle the smaller single pushchair, a reasonably sized suitcase and of course eldest daughter Harriett's Trunki.

Fortunately, a Farad roofbox from roofoxcarrriers.co.uk provides extra storage space, making for more comfortable journeys.

Otherwise everything else would have to go inside.

With comfortable leather trimmed seats

and smatterings of metal trim throughout, the 2008 Allure feels well put together, if a little minimal in its interior design.

Its raised height gives an added sense of security, even if the diesel unit is at times sluggish, especially when pulling away.

In the depths of the countryside, grip control comes into its own where during heavy downpours, thick mud becomes an increasing problem.

A turn of the dial in the centre console and the driver can rest

assured that traction is optimised in conditions of poor grip, giving increased control.

When an oncoming tractor forces a sudden stop and a hasty detour into an unwelcoming unmoved lay-by, the Peugeot makes no complaints.

FACTS AT A GLANCE:

New price range: £17,245; 0-60mph: 12.8secs; Top speed: 113mph; Economy: 78.5mpg (extra urban).

VED: £0 for the first year, £20 a year standard rate.

KENZIE IS AIMING FOR THE TOP OF INLINE HOCKEY!

SHEER hard work, dedication and natural ability in sport certainly paid off for 11 year old local youngster, Mackenzie Whilding; known as Kenzie to her friends.

Kenzie is a junior member of St Athan Golf Club but the sport she enjoys and excels at with a bold grille outlined in the shiny metal, as are the roof rails, door bottoms and wing mirrors.

Kenzie plays for Cardiff Capitals and in the space of a year has already earned nationally recognised awards by the British Inline Puck Hockey Association (BIPHA).

These include the under-10s south Wales top goaltender, the national top goaltender, the national dream team goaltender and south Wales' top goaltender runner up in the under-12s team even though she was still only 10 at the time.

The concept is simple; Peugeot has created a more robust estate car that embraces the challenges that the modern family will throw at it - a family like the Saunders clan, which decides to take a few days out and have a well-earned rest at Sandy Balls, the self-catering holiday park in the New Forest.

In preparation for the



tour, training schedules are to be held every couple of weeks in Rotherham, which means Kenzie will need to show exceptional commitment over the coming months and will be relying heavily on her parents, Sam and Keiran, to assist with their time and the transportation to the organised training sessions.

Kenzie or her parents can be contacted on 01446 751105 and will happily answer any questions or provide further information as requested, alternatively they may be contacted by post at 3 Drake Close, St Athan, Vale of Glamorgan, CF62 4JF. CM

YOUNG GARETH 'CALLS THE HORSES'

GARETH TOPHAM (24) is the youngest and newest racecourse commentator in the country.

Gareth from the Fairwater area of Cardiff was born in St David's Hospital, Canton and was a pupil of Cantonian High School, before moving to Leeds to study sports journalism at university. He said: "Sports journalism was the closest

ON AND OFF THE TURF with BRIAN LEE

course I could get so that I could become involved in horse-racing broadcasting."

Commentating is something Gareth wanted to do from the age of ten. He was attending primary school at Pentrebarwn when he won a competition to appear on the children's channel Nickelodeon as a budding commentator. This involved him

going to Taunton Races one afternoon and seeing what the job actually entailed.

An accomplished pianist, Gareth learned his trade commentating at point-to-point, harness race meetings and even at greyhound tracks. He also provided voiceovers for betting shops. And now he can be heard on racing channels such as Channel 4, Racing UK and ATR.

He told me: "It all really started when I used to watch racing on a Saturday afternoon in front of the television set with mum and dad. I enjoyed hearing the commentator say something and then hear how the crowd would react to what he said. I loved it and thought maybe one day I could do that. The rest as they say is history."

Gareth commented at Chester earlier this year to a crowd of 24,000; when he said: "They're off" for the first race the roar from the stands was electrifying.

He said: "It was a hugely exciting day with many close finishes and my pulse was

certainly racing."

He thanks fellow commentators Simon Holt, Darren Owen and Lee McKenzie for helping in his training, along with several other commentators.

Gareth is one of 16 commentators who travel the country 'calling the horses', as they say, at meetings big and small over the jumps or on the flat.

He drives hundreds of miles to some race meetings and he is such a gent that he astonishes me when he says his pet hate is cyclists, and admits to being "the world's most impatient and angry driver."

Having assisted Gareth at point-to-point meetings by giving him background information on some of the horses and riders, when standing alongside him from his commentary position, I know first hand how good he is at his job.

They say there is no such thing as a certainty in racing but as far as I am concerned, it is a dead cert that we will be hearing a lot more about this young man in the future.

Hockey club play their annual 'Turkeys' game

PENARTH Hockey Club brought the curtain down on the first half of its 2013-14 season with the traditional 'turkeys' game between its senior and junior members at Barry Sports Centre.

Two sides, made up of players either side of the 30-year mark, were press-ganged into one further appearance after a hard-fought autumn league campaign, bribed by the promise of a liquid warm-up rather than the usual flexing and stretching.

With some old faces making a welcome return for the weekend, the line-ups – under the command of Jones and Grant respectively – featured a blend of players from the 1st, 2nd and veteran XIs, with Phil Lane bravely volunteering to umpire solo.

As has become the norm with turkeys games, players were given the opportunity to try out positions unfamiliar to them on a regular Saturday, and 25 minutes of goalless action highlighted just how out of their depth some were.

Although the seniors enjoyed their moments in front of goal, returnee keeper Ben Jewess was rarely called on to make a save while, at the other end, 1st XI shotstopper Mark Harris single-handedly kept his regular teammates at bay.

The deadlock was finally broken in scrappy fashion as 2nd XI keeper Calum Grant led from the front, bundling the ball across the line after another rearguard action from Harris ultimately came up short in the face of greater opposition forces.

The sides turned around just a

goal apart, but the juniors emerged from the break determined to prove their superiority.

It didn't take long for the lead to double, as Sam Wooding – having not featured in the opening half – was left uncaged in the seniors' 25, and comfortably beat Harris in a one-on-one contest.

The seniors refused to buckle,

and with Craig Llewellyn – who had clearly left his 'shooting boots' at home – drifting back to a more familiar sweeping role, the side enjoyed more opportunities in front of goal.

However, the older side could

not find a way past Jewess, and fell further behind with a quarter of the game remaining as Chris Baker fired home from the right-side, Harris only aware of the jet-stream passing his facemask before the sound of ball on post signalled the third goal of the game.

It was shortly after this apparently decisive moment, and with time ticking down, that Lane invoked the 'next goal the winner' rule, giving the seniors added incentive to press forward.

Having spurned one chance to wrap the game up, when Jones missed from the penalty spot, age finally told over beauty when a quick ball from the back was worked into the juniors' 'D' and eventually forced home by Freddie Thomas to steal a famous victory.

Despite the obvious disappointment of seeing their hard work undone in such devastating fashion, the juniors sportingly provided the post-match refreshments, with copious – and welcome – lashings of homemade chilli on tap to accompany the tra-

ditional liquid refreshment at Penarth Athletic Club.

TEAMS:

U-30s: Calum Grant (captain), Tom Harran, Gareth Hurman, Sam Wooding, Arthur Jones, Joe Wells, Tom Parkinson, Chris Baker, Mat Noble, David Williams, Ben Jewess (GK) O-30s: Graeme Jones (captain), Dave Stevens, Richard Baker, Mark 'Jonty' Thomas, Rob Harrison, Dave Thomas, Freddie Thomas, Zbig Sobierski, Mark Robinson, Sam Doherty, Ian Smith, James 'Cuzzler' Davies, Craig Llewellyn, Mark Harris (GK)

Players young and old have a chance to lick their wounds for a few weeks before the veterans get things under way again with a mid-January fixture against Whitchurch.

League action resumes a week later, with the 1st XI hosting Wotton-under-Edge and the 2nd XI travelling west to take on bottom side Trinity St Davids.

Penarth Hockey Club always welcomes new, old and returning players, umpires, supporters, friends and helpers regardless of age and ability.

Training takes place on the artificial turf at Barry Sport Centre every Wednesday, with the juniors in action between 6-7pm and seniors between 7-8pm.

Further information can be obtained from club secretary Dave Stevens at d_stevens81@hotmail.co.uk.

CL

Try American Football!

Want to try something new this New Year? Why not try American Football!

The South Wales Warriors American Football team are recruiting for the upcoming season.

There will be an open training/taster session in Newport on January 5 from 1pm to 4pm. Registration cost £5 which includes kit and pitch hire.

The taster session will be held at: NHSOB RFC, Yew Tree Lane, Caerleon, Newport, Gwent, NP18 1LL. Visit southwaleswarriors.co.uk for more information.

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£4,290



58 VW Beetle 1.6 Luna 3-Dr. Met Blue, 1 Owner, FSH, CD Player, Aircon, E/Windows, C/Locking, 75K

£5,790



58 VW Polo 1.9 Sport TDI (100) 3-Dr. Met Black, Diesel, FSH, Aircon, CD Player, E/Windows, C/Locking, 72K

£5,990



56 NISSAN Note 1.4 SE 5-Dr. Met Blue, FSH, Aircon, CD Player, E/Windows, C/Locking, 78K

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59 PEUGEOT 207 S 1.4 5-Dr
In Silver, 32,000 miles, A/C
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In met blue, 68,000 miles, 1 owner with
a/c, very nice example
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Last gasp Bridgend Athletic earn a hard fought victory



Dan Howells makes a break.

Steven Lewis clears for Bridgend Athletic.
PICTURES BY KERRY FOTHERGILL

B R I D G E N D ATHLETIC left it until the final minute to record a seasonal double over Blackwood, with a last gasp try from replacement hooker Simon Mustoe converted from just inside the touchline by outside half Steven Lewis for a 16-15 victory.

The margin in the first game of the season at Newbridge Fields was only two points with Lewis again securing a last minute victory that time with a penalty for a 32-30 victory. Hence, a three point margin over the two games and two last minute kicks has given the Athletic eight points and Blackwood only two losing bonus points from their fixtures, and has left the Athletic on 25 points in ninth place and Blackwood in 12th place with 18 points.

The game was played on a real glue pot of a pitch giving the bulky Blackwood forwards a distinct advantage in set plays. However, the lighter Athletic eight showed dogged determi-

nation throughout and territorially enjoyed 60 per cent of the game.

The Athletic opened the scoring with a 10th minute penalty from outside half Steven Lewis and held their advantage until 10 minutes before half time. Two successive penalties saw Blackwood gain a line out 15 metres from the Athletic try line.

A catch and drive saw the home side make use of their weight advantage to create a rolling maul and force flanker Dean Gibb over the try line. Paulo Emanuelli converted.

This gave Blackwood fresh momentum and another excursion into the Athletic 22 saw the Athletic concede a penalty which Emanuelli goaled to put Blackwood 10-3 ahead at the interval.

The lighter Athletic pack were trying to move the bulkier home 8 around the park taking quick penalties – especially from debutant scrum half Aled Lewis who was showing great confidence to keep the ball alive.

Captain Sean Williams was leading by example with fellow back row forward Tom Penry-Ellis.

They went blind from

Locks Griff Davies and Darren Deguera also carried well and prop Wayne Fooks dug in well in the scrums against much heavier opposition. Full back Josh White and wing Dan Howells were both assured under the frequent up and unders employed by the home side.

The Athletic pressure paid off with the home side conceding two penalties which Lewis converted to bring the score back to 10-9.

A tapped penalty by scrum half Aled Lewis on halfway created an opening for wing Michael Powell to run 30 metres into the Blackwood 22. His inside pass saw Rhys Ward Jones held a metre short of the try line.

With 12 minutes to go the Athletic were reduced to 13 players when first wing Dan Howells and then centre Dan Apsee were yellow carded in the space of a minute for technical offences.

Blackwood, with numerical advantage, opted for a scrum inside the Athletic 22 instead of trying to kick for goal. Everything hinged on the Steven Lewis conversion. The outside half had had a mixed day with the boot and with the whole 14 of Blackwood charging at his kick showed great composure to send the ball soaring

PENCOED'S 1st XV lost 8-7 away to Glyncorrwg.

We started very positively and were playing well, scoring the first try wide on the left 10 minutes in after a good forwards drive, Ieuan Watkins making the touchdown.

Mark Davies added the conversion, with a brilliant kick considering the very strong wind blowing across the pitch.

Glyncorrwg then scored their own forward dominated try after 30 minutes with Number 8 Anthony Davies crossing for an unconverted try.

In the second half the Glyncorrwg forwards dominated, with a well organised driving maul which saw most of the second half in Pencoed territory.

Kicking was a lottery and Mark Davies, along with the Glyncorrwg full-back, missed a lot of penalties which on other days would have been converted.

At the end some loose kicking gave away hard earned possession. The

ABOVE:
Action from the Pencoed Second XV's game. For more Pencoed RFC photos visit: juliehancock.org.

game became forwards dominated and Glyncorrwg edged the battle.

A penalty kicked by Glyncorrwg was the only other successful kick of the game.

Mark Davies looked to have secured the lead, but his kick struck the post.

At the end a brawl ended with Andrew Shillam and an opposition forward receiving yellow cards.

JH

Tight game ends in loss for Pencoed

Glyncorrwg finished the game in our 22 which typified the game. Despite the defeat there were good shifts put in, and young substitutes did themselves proud.

The 2nd XV lost to a very good Bridgend Athletic squad, the final score 17-46, with Pencoed scoring three tries.

Again there were some good performances from younger players.

Strong showing from the Bridgend Athletic youth

BRIDGEND ATHLETIC youth welcomed Pencoed youth to Newbridge Fields for this much awaited local derby clash in the Osprey's A league.

With Pencoed third in the league and the Ath second this was always going to be a close game and so it turned out with both teams looking to play an expansive game.

The Ath started at a good pace and with their pack securing good early possession they ran the ball at Pencoed from the off.

Good solid Pencoed defence however, together with some poor handling from the Athletic, prevented the Ath from making any real progress.

Indeed it was the visitors who took an early lead after the referee deemed them to have not released the ball and the successful kick put them 3-0 ahead after six minutes.

This remained the pattern of the game and in a carbon copy situation the Athletic infringed off side and the visitors found themselves 6-0 up after 10 minutes.

The game ebbed and flowed with both teams willing to run deep and the Athletic's pack with Iestyn Merriman, Rory Thomas and Reuben Tooze looking superb began to make the difference and it was from a forward move that the ball went out to

the back in the second period it was expected that the Athletic would play a territorial game but Pencoed were having none of it and from the restart they ran the

Maesteg rugby league boys make a promising start

IN just their second match as the Maesteg School-based academy, the South Wales under-18 rugby league side missed out on a second win, losing to a mere conversion as they went down 12-10 to South Gloucestershire and Stroud College.

South Wales took the lead after seven minutes when Harry Boots broke through the strong opposition defence; Ben Jones missed the kick.

The visitors struck back just after the 20 minute mark when James Mason dived under the sticks and converted.

Then, five minutes later, the same player went over for another, and converted again to put them 12-4 up at the break in a game that was played in 30-minute halves.

The Welsh didn't take long to get on the board in the second half as Dan Maiden scored a try in the corner in less than two minutes. Ben Jones converted well to put them just two points behind.

By now, heavy rain had taken its toll and while some parts of the

pitch were a little muddy before the game, by the second half they had turned into a quagmire making skilful play hard to come by and the visitors held out for their close victory.

This Maesteg School based outfit will have more college fixtures early this year. Then in March, a wider group of players will join the Maesteg boys to form a Scorpions under-19s squad to play in a new southern competition, hopefully as double headers with the senior Championship One games.

IG

ball at the Athletic from everywhere.

Their forwards were also beginning to compete in the set pieces and provide their sharp backs with some much needed possession.

With the weather conditions deteriorating credit had to go to Pencoed for playing a handling game and it was only the excellent Bridgend defence, with Tom Jenkins and Craig Lewis in the centre and Ashton Chalmers and Josh Seldon out wide, that kept them out on a number of occasions.

With time running out and the weather and light getting progressively worse, it was another forward domination that would seal the game and when back row forward Rory Thomas went over under the posts with six minutes remaining, another Ben Jones conversion took the score to 19-9, making sure Athletic would not be caught.

In almost darkness the referee blew the final whistle on what was an excellent game given the conditions.

Credit must go to both sides for putting on an excellent game of rugby played in a great spirit.

Pencoed will count themselves unlucky not to have got closer to the Athletic and will be looking forward to the return match towards the end of the season.